

Canadian

# Restaurant & Foodservice News

06  
10

Official Magazine of the Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association

## Organic Alcohol

**A BEVERAGE TREND  
GAINING MOMENTUM**

Publication Agreement #40033126

**Retaining Skilled Seasonal Workers | CRFA Update  
2010 Canadian Chef Survey | Chef Lynn Crawford**



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# contents

May/June 2010

VOL. 1 NO. 2

## FEATURES

28

### Organic Alcohol 101

A slow but sure beverage trend gains momentum

*By Sarah Snowdon*

36

### 2010 Canadian Chef Survey

According to the top industry chefs, taste is still second to none

*By Mark Baltazar*

53

### 2010 CRFA Show at a Glance

54

### Innovative Product Pavilion

57

### Wisdom of the Ages

With healthy living and food sensitivities top of mind, ancient grains are making a comeback

*By Lisa Kopochinski*

60

### Keeping it Cool

New trends in refrigerators, freezers and icemakers aim to help you reduce your carbon footprint

*By Lisa Kopochinski*

39

### CRFA News and Updates

28



36



57



60



46



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26

## DEPARTMENTS

8

### Editor's Note

10

### My First Job

John Betts, President, McDonald's Restaurants of Canada

12

### Front of the House

Leo Canapi is guided by persistence, patience and passion

32

### Canadian Trailblazer

Change is a-brewing with Gerard Curran

*By Prasanthi Vasanthakumar*

68

### Back of the House

It's Lynn time

*By Shayne Stephens*

“ Leo Canapi is one of those rare individuals who demonstrates that with the right attitude, intensity, passion and drive you can accomplish wonderful things. We are so fortunate to have Leo on the White Spot team. ”

Warren Erhart, President, White Spot Hospitality

## COLUMNS

13

### Designs That Make 'Cents' Open Concept Kitchens

*By Glen Peloso*

14

### The Staff Room

#### Retaining Skilled Seasonal Workers

*By Heather Kennedy*

16

### Turning Tables

#### Marketing by Numbers

*By David Swanston*

18

### Ask the Expert

#### Are You Up for the 'Market Share' Challenge?

*By Hugh Johnston*

20

### The Bottom Line

#### Secrets of Success

*By Geoff Wilson and Jeff Dover*

22

### Consumer Trends

#### The 'Millennials'

*By Linda Strachan*

24

### Raising the Bar

#### Here Comes the Sun

*By Gavin MacMillan*

26

### Wine Country

#### Australia

*By Jamie Drummond*

63

### Playing it SAFE

#### Embracing the Virtual Classroom

*By Kevin Freeborn*

64

### Serving Up Green

#### Boost Your Menu with Local and Sustainable Flavours

*By André LaRivière*

66

### Healthy Eating

#### Are you Getting the MSG?

*By Sue Mah*



# Food is IN.



Not that it hasn't always been popular, because it has. But today, thanks in large part to specialized stations like the Food Network, exquisite sets fitted with the finest equipment and a smiley studio audience have given way to much more interesting backdrops, including the farmers markets of faraway lands and cranberry bogs closer to home. We have favourite chefs. Favourite recipes. Favourite restaurants. And all of it translates into a monetary number that, for example, the production houses analyze in an attempt to decide if they should continue creating more shows.

Included in this issue of the magazine is both the CRFA's in-depth report *Foodservice Facts 2010*\* and a story on the trend findings of the *CRFA's Canadian Chef Survey*. Let me make this clear: these numbers, these findings, can enhance *your* numbers...if used as a catalyst for action. A simple example:

At one point or another, who of us hasn't been a tad bit annoyed by how small ketchup packages are? I mean, no one I know uses just one package. They use three, at the least. That said, Heinz looked at the numbers and, get this, acted on them, recently releasing a new and improved package that holds the equivalent of three of the old packs. The result? Reduced packaging costs (additional profit). Reduced waste (better for the environment). And much more user-friendly product (less annoying for ketchup lovers). Not bad, hey?

Take the numbers and trends. Study them. Be creative and let them spur you to action. Don't let them go to waste.

Switching gears, I recently had the pleasure of attending the CRFA show in Toronto, and have to admit that it was quite a sight to behold. When not conversing with many of you about the launch of *Canadian Restaurant & Foodservice News* – thanks again for the overwhelmingly positive feedback, by the way – I was checking out some great new products in the innovative product pavilion, watching a host of celebrity chefs work the stage, tasting 'the Tabasco mash' and nearly everything else I could get my hands on and sipping some outrageous cocktails at a number of great evening events. It was both busy and a blast. The sister events in BC and Halifax, I'm told, were equally as successful.

On that note, as CRFA president Garth Whyte mentions in his message on page 40, we are excited to announce that our ever-evolving partnership with the CRFA has expanded and we will be putting together a foodservice event for Alberta in October. I assure you, it will be unlike anything you've experienced before.

As always, your feedback is welcome.

Enjoy the issue.

*Shayne Stephens*  
Editor-in-Chief

\* For CRFA members only.

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MY FIRST JOB

# John BETTS

PRESIDENT, McDONALD'S  
RESTAURANTS OF CANADA





**WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST JOB?**

It was the fall of 1970, and I was a college freshman in my hometown of Southampton, N.Y.

McDonald's opened up and I applied for a part-time job. I became a manager at 19 and haven't looked back.

**WHAT WAS THE BEST PART ABOUT IT?**

I enjoyed the fast pace and all the different folks – crew, managers and customers – that you would be dealing with on your shift. It's a very energizing, fun business to be in.

**WHAT WAS THE CRAZIEST OR FUNNIEST THING YOU EVER DID IN THAT FIRST JOB?**

Probably the time we drove my brother David's Volkswagen Beetle through the front door of the restaurant and parked it by the counter so we could listen to music. Somehow, making it inside was much easier than driving it back out! It's not something that's covered in any McDonald's training manual, so I wouldn't recommend our crews trying it!

**WERE YOU EVER INTERESTED IN ANY OTHER OCCUPATION?**

I was really drawn to marine biology during my last couple years of high school, and Southampton College was renowned for it, so I went there my freshman year to become a marine biologist. Somewhere in that spring semester, I decided to switch over to business because of the fun I had managing a restaurant.

**HOW AND WHEN DID YOU REALIZE YOU COULD CARVE OUT A CAREER IN FOODSERVICE AND WHAT WAS YOUR PROGRESSION TO WHERE YOU ARE NOW?**

We have an expression at McDonald's: 'You've got ketchup in your veins.' I was somebody that was hooked fairly early on. After working a few years as restaurant manager on Long Island, I moved to Boston for a 15-year period where I was a manager and then director of operations. After that, I moved to Oakbrook, Illinois – where our world headquarters are located – to take on a role as director of field service, which consisted of consulting restaurants around the world.

I then became a regional vice-president in South Carolina, before holding a similar position in Tampa, and then moved on to take over as

chief operations officer for the southeastern United States where I oversaw about 3,000 restaurants.

I then headed back to Oakbrook to lead a global assignment, which gave me some experience working with the European and Canadian teams, before moving to Michigan to serve as general manager for the region. Finally, before accepting the job of President of McDonald's Canada in early 2008, I was vice-president of our beverage strategy in the United States, which focused on coffee and specialty beverages.

**WHO HAS BEEN THE MOST INFLUENTIAL PERSON IN YOUR LIFE?**

My father was a diplomat in the U.S. State Department, and I spent most of my youth in Europe. I really got to see a lot of different things, living in diverse countries such as Turkey, Italy, Hungary, Austria and Germany. We'd move every couple of years, so I think it prepared me well for my career at McDonald's where I've moved around almost as much as I did as a kid.

Just because of the nature of diplomacy, my father impressed on us the value of consensus-building, being respectful of others, focusing on communication, appreciating different cultures and trying to understand things differently.

**WHAT DO YOU FEEL YOUR ORGANIZATION DOES EXTREMELY WELL AND HOW?**

System alignment is vital to our ongoing success, which means having our owner/operators (franchisees), suppliers and company employees working together to better connect with our customers. We call it the "three-legged stool" and it's a business model that places the customer experience at the core of all we do.

The most recent example of this powerful connection is best exemplified by the work we've done in the past year to get Canadians to try our Premium Roast coffee. We knew we had to deal with a lot of skepticism in the marketplace, but we challenged everyone to start fresh and focused our efforts on brewing the best cup of coffee in the QSR industry.

It was a bold approach and a massive undertaking – doing three rounds of free coffee for a two-week period in less than a year – but we were undeterred. Our free coffee initiative prompted a lot of people to look at McDonald's in a different light. It also surprised and delighted customers who had not been re-acquainted with some of the other changes we had made to stay relevant in terms of menu

evolution, the new look and feel of our restaurants and our unrelenting focus on delivering quality and value. It produced results that have propelled our business to unprecedented heights.

**WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE INDEPENDENT RESTAURANT?**

I like a variety of places, especially neighbourhood restaurants, but having spent a lot of time in Italy, I have to admit that I'm partial to Italian food. There are many great trattorias both here in Toronto and right across the country, but two in particular come to mind. *Coppi Ristorante* is a great place to enjoy fine dining with clients and business associates, while *Grazie* ranks among my favourite spots to take my kids to, because of the quality of the food, friendly service and great value.

**WHAT IS YOUR OWN PERSONAL SIGNATURE DISH AT HOME?**

Sadly, I don't get to eat at home as much as I would like to, or have the skill to prepare anything too elaborate – although I do know how to grill a great burger! When I'm not eating at McDonald's, I actually like to eat at other QSRs and fast-casual restaurants to stay on top of what else is going on in the industry and the different choices available to customers.

**WHAT WAS THE BEST PIECE OF ADVICE YOU'VE EVER BEEN GIVEN?**

McDonald's founder Ray Kroc used to say "None of us is as good as all of us." These words have helped shape my vision of leadership and define my management style. It's not about the guy at the top. It's all about surrounding yourself with great people and working as a team to grow your business.

**WHAT'S NEXT?**

We have great momentum right now, but we need to guard against complacency. We're coming off our best quarter in more than 20 years and my job is to keep everyone focused on continuing to deliver what we do better than anyone in the industry. It's what we at McDonald's like to call QSC&V – quality, service, cleanliness and value.

I keep telling our people that when we work together, we are an unstoppable force. I think we've made a pretty compelling case these last few years, but I guess my ambition would be to have no doubters left, both from inside and outside our organization.



# An Industry INSPIRATION

Guided by persistence, patience and passion, Leo Canapi has found both success and a new home



*[Editor's Note: Leo Canapi is an inspiration. Despite the obvious language barrier and culture shock that accompanies immigrating from a foreign country, he is now the General Manager of White Spot's West Georgia & Seymour Street location in Vancouver, BC. Leo recently experienced "Olympic Fever" and his restaurant broke a number of the chain's records during the 2010 Olympics. This article was taken from a speech he gave recently.]*

There are three key virtues that have helped me get to where I am now: persistence, patience and passion.

Let's start off with persistence, the main ingredient in the recipe of my success. Basically, persistence is the art of continuing on, of never giving up no matter what the obstacle is.

In my life, there have been many obstacles, especially when I moved to Canada from the Philippines. I didn't speak English fluently, to say the least. It took me seven months to get a job as a dishwasher at White Spot. Truthfully, at any point, I could have given up and gone back to the Philippines, but I stayed and made it work.

Do you have what it takes to persist? Do you have the determination, drive and tenacity to stick to your goals? Do you keep going only when things are easy? No! You

stick to it even when it gets really hard, because that's when the effort and determination come in.

Remember, persistence is about fighting to reach your goals by giving it your all. Now I don't mean giving your all every day. You need time to rest and relax. Sure, you need to be calculated, but you can't bang your head against the wall when things get too hard.

That's why persistence needs patience.

We've all heard the phrase, "Patience is a virtue," and it really is when working towards a goal, even though some people think that patience and persistence are opposites.

Patience shows that sometimes persistence isn't enough. You need patience to work through the tough stuff and find the right opportunity. Think about how much patience you needed to learn how to ride a bicycle. You had to wait for good weather and then patiently learn to ride, no matter how badly you wanted the training wheels off.

In this day and age, we tend to expect rewards without having to wait too long or work too hard. Sometimes, however, the timing is simply not right, and it's necessary to wait for that right moment to come along. This might apply to a career, a business opportunity, or buying a house. It doesn't

mean do nothing but wait. There are many other skills you can be working on that can help when the time is right.

My patience helped me become a general manager. As I waited for the right time, I worked with many great general managers and took the time to learn from them. Daydes taught me that the numbers don't lie in finances. Frank taught me people skills. And Dan taught me to have high standards.

If persistence is the foundation, and patience is pacing yourself for the right opportunity, then the third and final virtue is passion.

Your passion is your fuel. It is what pushes you towards your goal. Without it, where would your hopes, dreams and ambitions lie? Without passion, nothing really matters much, your life grey and dull. Passion adds the colour. It inspires, intrigues and drives you on. It makes you feel alive and sustains when it seems difficult to carry on.

My passion is to be the best I can be in anything I do.

Combine these three virtues, and you have an unbeatable combination. And they don't cost anything! Try it out. Get in touch with your passion, apply a little persistence, add a drop of patience, and you will surprise yourself.

**“Leo Canapi is one of those rare individuals who demonstrates that with the right attitude, intensity, passion and drive you can accomplish wonderful things. We are so fortunate to have Leo on the White Spot team.”**

**Warren Erhart, President, White Spot Hospitality**

# Into the GREAT WIDE OPEN

Open concept kitchens can be gorgeous, but need to be planned carefully



When asked for my thoughts on open concept kitchens in restaurants, I like to make it clear that while an interesting idea – the drama and excitement of the kitchen in plain view and adding to the ambiance of the space – there are a number of pitfalls that one has to be careful of. Simply, kitchens can often provide the wrong entertainment.

That said, I don't advise that the whole space be open. Keep in mind that a restaurant creates its dishes out of food that arrives in numerous boxes and crates from various suppliers and then needs to be cleaned. This, I suspect, is something the customers don't want to see. Does a customer really need to see the first two layers of a head of lettuce discarded to give them a greater appreciation for their salad? I think not. Without a private area where the food can be prepared, at least to the point where the line can make use of it, the chef's magic is diminished.

It is equally important to allow the staff a place to retreat from the eyes of the customers. We all know that like the temperature, tempers can rise in the kitchen. The yelling, screaming and occasional "blue language" that accompanies such heated moments, really isn't something that we want to share with our customer base.

Another thing to keep in mind is that in an open environment, the kitchen becomes part of the decor. This means that the kitchen must be spotless at all times. Kitchens on a busy night tend to get a bit dishevelled, littered with a mess of dirty pots and pans, so extra attention must be paid to keep things clean, which



Market Fine Foods, Photographer: Tanja Tiziana Burci

isn't easy in a hectic, working kitchen. If you are going to have an open concept kitchen, it is important to implement processes that ensure this happens.

With an open concept kitchen you will also have to budget for an alternative form of lighting, as fluorescent tubes at full levels can overwhelm the romantic lighting levels in the dining room, resulting in a series of overwhelmingly bright tables that become difficult to seat. As the kitchen is a serious food preparation work shop, where sharp knives and open flames are used, finding the right lighting levels is imperative for workplace safety. Track lights, I have found, can be directional enough to provide good light where it is needed, without too much unwanted light spill.

Often the open concept kitchen includes plans for a chef's table, a brilliant feature that gives customers a very personalized experience, putting the chef centre stage as host for the evening. In saying that, you need to make sure you have a chef that is capable of playing such a role. Massimo Capra and Lynn Crawford are naturals at this sort of thing, but experiences can become oddly uncomfortable with those less gregarious.

Having an open concept kitchen with a chef's table can be a great addition to a space, provided there is hidden preparation space, solace for staff, procedures for keeping things spotless, proper lighting and, of course, the right people in place. Bon appetit!

**Glen Peloso**, Principal Designer of Glen Peloso Interiors, Inc., has been designing spaces for a diverse range of commercial, corporate and residential clients for almost 15 years and hosts such television design shows as *Restaurant Makeover* on the Food Network. For more information, visit [www.glenpelosointeriors.com](http://www.glenpelosointeriors.com).



# Welcome BACK



## Retaining skilled seasonal workers



As we finally shake off the last traces of winter, many foodservice employers are gearing up for the busy summer tourist season: changing menus, cleaning off patio furniture and hiring seasonal staff.

Scouting for skilled and enthusiastic workers each spring can be a difficult prospect. Scanning through uninspired applications from candidates looking for any summer job to pay next year's tuition is not always the most rewarding venture, but with a shrinking youth labour market, this is the reality many face. However, having staff who will impress your customers is an essential HR strategy. For businesses only open during the summer season, good help is vital.

A particularly efficient way to employ talented people for the summer is to retain your employees from the previous season. Keeping your best staff members year after year allows you to save on recruitment and training costs and ensures you have a qualified, experienced and committed staff. Here are some tips to ensure the return of as many of your seasonal employees as possible, and strategies to hire new ones as necessary.

**1. At the end of the summer season, ask employees whether they would like to return the following year.** Consider conducting exit interviews to find out why some employees are keen to return while others are not. Some will be leaving for legitimate reasons such as a school work placement or a move after graduation, but others may wish for a workplace with more benefits or training. Use these results to tweak HR policies. The results will not only boost seasonal retention, but make your longer-term employees more committed as well.

**2. Keep in touch with employees you would like to re-hire.** Sending a quick email to say hello, a holiday greeting, or an invitation to a staff party will keep you

operation top-of-mind when they start thinking about summer plans. Consider creating a social networking group where current and former employees can chat with each other and you. Also, encourage seasonal staff to swing by and have a meal when they are in town – a discount or freebie is a great gesture and could even encourage new business if they bring along family or friends.

**3. Offer extra incentives to returning employees.** Whether it's a higher wage, a promotion, non-monetary bonuses, or training for a supervisory role, they will feel encouraged to come back. Make sure the incentives build with each year employees return.

**4. Be a choice employer.** This is the most effective way of encouraging employees to return. Providing a fun, flexible, and positive workplace will have seasonal staff looking forward to returning the following year. Make such issues as work-life balance, training, teamwork, and communication a priority. You'll earn a reputation as a place people want to work, resulting not only in repeat seasonal employees but also in other qualified workers hoping to gain a position with you.

**5. If your top seasonal employees are not returning for reasons unrelated to the job, ask if they have family members or friends who would be interested in coming on board.** If they genuinely enjoyed their time working for you, they

will not hesitate to recommend hard-working individuals to take over the role they are leaving.

**6. Expand your focus from the typical student-on-summer-break to other labour markets.** Retired individuals may be looking for new experiences and extra income; their maturity and varied work history can bring an added dimension to your team. Winter employees will need to find work until the snow falls again; as many have prior tourism experience, they possess a great range of customer service skills suited to the foodservice industry. Some summer employers even have reciprocal agreements with winter operations to hire off-season staff. This benefits both employers, who retain experienced workers who are less likely to have forgotten skills in the off-season, and the employees, who are provided continuous employment and opportunities for cross-training.

Also consider targeting international workers with the appropriate visas, as many are looking for short-term work and may offer foodservice experience and additional language skills for your overseas guests. And don't forget untapped labour pools such as people with disabilities, new Canadians and Aboriginal persons.

While you won't be able to retain all your best seasonal workers year after year, being an employer of choice who offers a great work environment and perks to returning employees will go a long way to ensuring that a high percentage will happily come back.

---

*Heather Kennedy is a Manager of Marketing and Communications for the Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council (CTHRC), a national organization that addresses labour market issues and promotes professionalism in the Canadian tourism sector. For information on any of the programs, services or products offered by the CTHRC, e-mail [info@cthrc.ca](mailto:info@cthrc.ca), call 613.231.6949 or visit [www.cthrc.ca](http://www.cthrc.ca).*

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# Marketing by NUMBERS

Developing the right marketing budget is key to an establishment's success



The recent economic challenges have affected operators in all segments of the hospitality industry. Input and operating costs have increased, consumer spending is reserved and no local bailouts appear to be on the horizon. Not for many years has our industry faced such belt-tightening. To survive, and even thrive, during this time, it is imperative that impactful and cost effective marketing programs be implemented.

The question is, how much should you spend?

Spending too much will reduce the return on your marketing investment, while too little may not engage customers. Resources are limited and no one can afford to waste money on ineffective programs.

Developing a strategic marketing plan will increase the likelihood that your promotional efforts will successfully reach your target markets, and that your marketing activities will be coordinated to make best use of your investment. Setting and adhering to a budget will ensure that marketing costs will be controlled and that performance can be measured.

There are several common practices for establishing marketing budgets, although some are more effective than others. Canadian foodservice operations spend about three per cent of their budgets on marketing and advertising. The amount spent by individual organizations varies based on their competitive strategy, available resources, competition practices and desired outcomes.

When establishing a budget, many organizations use the top-down, incremental approach. They say, "What did we spend last year, and how much more or less should we spend this year?" This figure is then scaled according to the anticipated sales volume. For this budgeting approach to be useful, operators must be confident that their current marketing investment and activities are effective, and that

## Marketing with Facebook

A recent Angus Reid survey revealed that 91 per cent of respondents have Facebook accounts. With over 400 million users, Facebook can be a valuable component of your marketing plan. Many organizations have already created fan pages on Facebook for their businesses and products. An underutilized option is the use of Facebook ads to bring users to your pages and website.

Facebook ads allow you to specify and reach very specific target demographics. You can select who will receive your ads based on criteria such as geographic region, age, sex, marital status and a host of other variables. You then can decide whether you wish to pay per view or per click, and specify how much you're willing to spend per day.

Facebook ads give you greater control over your spending, and can generate high response rates because of your ability to reach your target audience.

they will be suitable for accomplishing the firm's goals for the coming year.

A different approach is referred to as bottom-up budgeting. This method is more time-consuming, but can result in more targeted and cost effective marketing plans. The organization must first identify and quantify its goals for the coming year, such as setting an objective to increase sales by five per cent. General strategies and specific activities are then planned that are designed to achieve the established objectives.

Once the organization believes that they have created a marketing plan that can address their needs, the cost of each activity is forecast. The sum of these anticipated costs becomes the basis for the marketing budget. This process is more rigorous

because it allows management to know how every marketing dollar is being spent, and that these investments are being channelled toward programs that have been designed to achieve specific strategic outcomes.

Greater scrutiny of spending will encourage those responsible for developing marketing initiatives to carefully evaluate the cost/benefit of each activity.

Understanding how to determine an appropriate budget figure for your marketing activities can save you money, stretch your marketing dollars and increase the success of your promotions. The marketing plans that result will help you meet today's challenges, and can position you for significant growth as conditions improve.

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*David Swanston is a Hospitality and Foodservice Consultant, Principal of Focused Industry Training Seminars and is an instructor at major Canadian university business schools. Since 1997, he has helped a wide variety of organizations develop and launch new concepts, turn around troubled operations, and improve sales, profits, controls and efficiency. To learn more about how he can help you improve your sales, profits and performance, contact him directly at 905.331.6115 or [contactfit@fitseminars.ca](mailto:contactfit@fitseminars.ca)*



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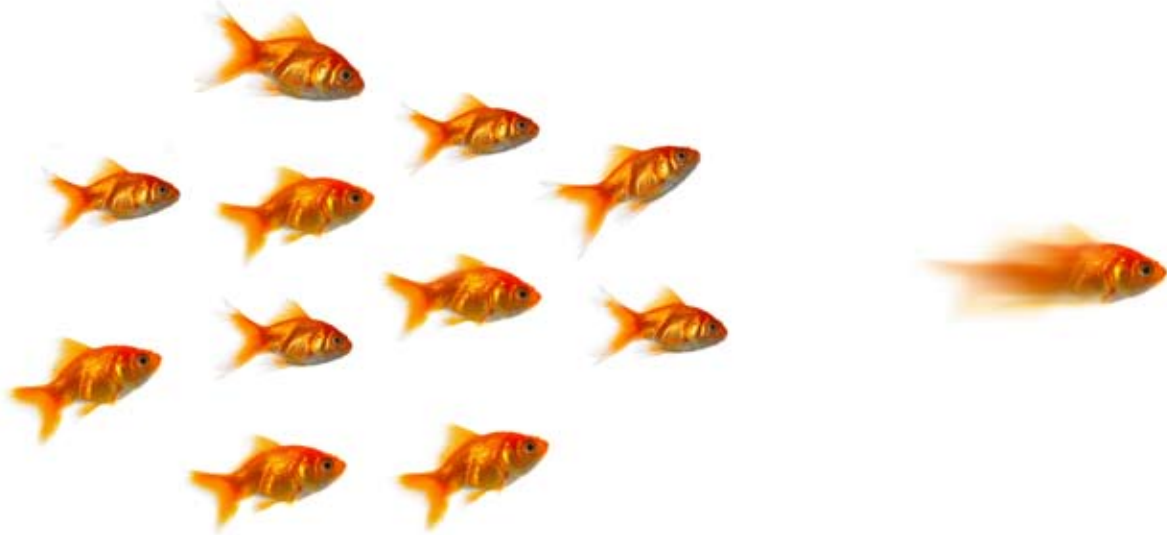
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# Are you up for THE CHALLENGE?

What matters most when playing the 'market share game'



The CRFA's long term forecast – and similar long term forecasts in the U.S. – are challenging, to say the least.

They challenge us as restaurant and foodservice operators to think about how we will succeed in a future where guest traffic growth is not much greater than population growth, where industry cash flow margins are thin, where market share has been lost to dominant Canadian grocery chains and where governments maintain sales tax advantages for these same grocery players.

Over the next five years, we will be involved in a 'market share game,' as growth in guest traffic between now and 2015 will come from taking business away from someone else in our industry. Poor operators may not make it to 2015, as they see the little profit they generate today evaporate under the weight of intense competition.

Knowing why your best customers come to you and consistently meeting and exceeding their expectations will separate the best from the rest. Simply, operators that understand and focus on their advantages will do better than the operators who do not.

For chain operators, who cannot focus on getting to know customers the way an independent can, it will be essential to focus on consistency and convenience when looking to gain market share. They will need to be aware of and action the numerous advantages that come with their size, predominantly the ability to offer value to a broad range of customers. Look for chains to dominate even more than they do today, particularly in suburban markets.

For niche chains and independents, knowing their specific guests' needs better than anyone else will be essential to their survival. Advantages that come from being directly in touch with the guest every day, being nimble and innovative, and being laser-focused, work well in a 'market share game'. Look for niche players and independents to own the urban space where many chains lose a number of their size and convenience advantages.

For those stuck in the middle, these next five years will be very tough. Trying to be all things to all people will be even harder for the mid-sized operator than it is today.

"There is no business harder to manage strategically than a medium-sized firm," offers Ken Wong, Fellow in Marketing at Queens University and VP Knowledge Development at Level 5 Consulting. "Indeed, this is the case regardless of industry and geography.

"One of the key ways for medium sized companies to break free from the trap in the middle is to focus on delivering an experience to the guest that concentrates on a specific consumer need," adds Wong. The experiences not easily copied by chains and that need some critical mass to make sense financially are the ones that will pay off.

Again, the next five years will indeed be a challenge. But those who are prepared to do what their business needs, based on what works for their guests, will make it through.

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*Hugh Johnston, CA, CMC is a strategy consultant working with chain restaurant and foodservice leaders to unlock greater value in their business. For more information contact Hugh at 416-662-5670 or visit [hughjohnston.com](http://hughjohnston.com)*



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# Secrets of SUCCESS

## 10 Key Factors for Running a Profitable Restaurant



The restaurant business is a challenging one.



Tracking 2,500 restaurants over a three-year period, an Ohio State University professor concluded that 25 per cent of restaurant start-ups failed within the first year, and 60 per cent of restaurant start-ups failed over the three-year study. Put simply, 85 per cent of the start-ups failed within the first three years. Pretty sobering statistic, wouldn't you say?

No matter how you define success – whether you want to make a living, maximize profitability or achieve a targeted return on investment – the basics of restaurant industry success never change.

Here then are the top 10 things to consider to ensure a profitable restaurant.

**1 LOCATION**  
Selecting a location with significant sources of demand (for the type of restaurant) is the most important decision when deciding to open a restaurant. Is the location easy to find and access? If you have a fixed location, is the restaurant's concept designed to take advantage of the demand drivers in the area (i.e. product offering, customer experience and service style)?

**2 QUALITY FOOD AND SERVICE**  
You're only as successful as your last meal. Similarly, you're only as good as your last customer interaction. Successful restaurateurs ensure their restaurants offer quality food and service every day. Giving your customers a reason to come back and also to recommend the restaurant to others gives you a distinct competitive advantage.

**3 REALISTIC FINANCIAL FORMULA**  
Does the through-put of the restaurant allow it to generate sufficient revenues to meet fixed costs and profit expectations after all variable expenses have been covered? Too often, through-put is not considered. For example, if a restaurant requires \$4,000 a day to break even and the average check is \$10, 400 covers must be served each day. If the restaurant can only accommodate 300 covers per day, there is a problem.

**4 MENUS ENGINEERED TO YIELD OPTIMUM GROSS MARGIN**  
Restaurant operators often talk about controlling food cost. However, we often only examine the food cost as a percentage of sales. Restaurants bank dollars – not percentages. Would you

rather sell a steak dinner at \$40 with a 40 per cent food cost (\$26 gross margin) or a chicken dinner at \$12 with a 20 per cent food cost (\$9.60 gross margin)? The most important marketing tool a restaurant has is its menu and it should be engineered to steer customers to select the menu items that yield the highest gross margins. In our experience, restaurants increase margins by at least three per cent (and often by a greater amount) the first time the menu is properly engineered.

#### 5 MAXIMUM BUYING LEVERAGE

A dollar saved in purchasing goes right to the bottom line of the income statement. Often a big difference exists between "street price" and the price paid for food and supplies when restaurants maximize their purchasing leverage. Attention should be paid to purchasing, and every restaurant should consider one-stop shopping, buying groups and volume management.

#### 6 LABOUR BALANCED TO DEMAND

What is the staffing requirement to open the restaurant's doors. This is the fixed component of the restaurant's labour cost. Profits are often squandered through poor scheduling of the variable component of labour costs – the additional labour you need to meet anticipated demand. Accurately forecasting demand is important in controlling labour cost. Determining the labour requirements per hour and scheduling staff accordingly will help ensure a profitable restaurant.

#### 7 EFFECTIVE CAPITALIZATION

The life cycle of a restaurant is typically five years. In year one, the business is built. In years two and three, the business is fine tuned. In years four and five, earnings are maximized. After that, the business must be re-invented to create new excitement for customers. Many operators forget that in the first year, up to six months of working capital may be required to build the business.

#### 8 MARKET EFFECTIVELY AND ACCORDING TO YOUR RESTAURANT'S DEMAND DRIVERS

Is your demand destination, generative or impulse? What is your trade area? How are your customers segmented? You must know your customers – their demographic profile, needs, preferences and buying behaviours and then market accordingly. Find ways to measure the success of each marketing program, so you are able to focus on successful initiatives in the future.

Here's a hint – if all your restaurant needs to do to fill up on Mother's Day or Valentine's Day is unlock the doors, don't agree to advertise in "special" sections of the local paper. Instead, ask for the same advertising rates during a slow time for your restaurant.

#### 9 EXPERIENCE

It's relatively easy to get into the restaurant industry. Sign a lease. Buy some food. Hire some staff. It's what happens after you open the doors that makes the difference between success and failure. What you don't know WILL hurt you! If you don't have experience, get it - through school, through working in the business, or through a trusted adviser. Make your mistakes on somebody else's dollar before investing in your own restaurant.

#### PARTICIPATIVE MANAGEMENT

10 You can't effectively run a restaurant from your office or from your desk at another business. The owner must be present, involved and leading. Absentee ownership has resulted in failure, time after time.

While no one can guarantee success in the restaurant industry, if these factors are taken into consideration, the financial risk for your restaurant will be greatly reduced.

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The

# MILLENNIALS

A look at why the 18 to 24 year-old demographic is key to your success



Born between 1980 and 1995, the ‘Millennials’ – also known as Generation Y, Echo Boomers, and a host of other catchy titles – are around nine million strong in Canada, and interestingly, are the country’s most frequent restaurant users.

Generally team-spirited, tech-savvy, ethnically and culturally diverse, Millennials have grown up with cell phones, the Internet and social networking tools, staying very connected with family and friends. They also stay single longer, remain more emotionally and financially attached to their parents, and delay their own parental responsibilities longer than the generations before them.

Given that they spend less time reading newspapers and magazines or listening to the radio, and have a wariness of inauthentic advertising, marketers must find creative approaches to reach this group. However, if your restaurant is located in the Atlantic region or Saskatchewan where the population skews older, keep in mind that Millennials will be less important to your business.

Against all logic, 18 to 24 year-olds remain the highest restaurant users, despite the fact that they were the hardest hit by the recession, with unemployment rates among 15 to 24 year-olds hitting 16 per cent in the past year.

## HEALTHY CHOICES

While there is no question that indulgent foods remain their top preference,

Millennials are more likely to choose a restaurant that serves healthy options, choosing smoothies, veggie burgers, frozen slushies and hot chicken sandwiches over beef entrees apart from burgers. They are also more likely to choose foods with descriptors like organic and vegetarian, but are not looking for low sodium. Recommendations and satisfying a particular food craving is what tends to drive them through the door in the first place.

## GLOBAL FLAVOURS

Despite the ‘Boomers’ embracing of global flavours, it’s their kids, the Millennials, who will drive the need for operators to incorporate more of these international flavour trends into their menus. Their global palates are helping to drive the demand for sushi, Indian, Thai, Korean and Vietnamese food.

## VALUE, CHOICE AND SOCIALIZING

Although a high percentage of their low income is disposable, Millennials want

the most bang for their buck. That said, they look for places that serve big portions or smaller, inexpensive plates with lots of variety. They are also more likely to be attracted by deal offers, particularly coupons, discounts or buy-one-get-one offers.

Millennials also tend to have unset meal times. They eat traditional food, but not necessarily at traditional meals. For example, they’d be open to having breakfast foods available all day long and their supper and late-night snacking choices are often driven by social activities. They choose specialty coffees more often than most, and look for establishments where it’s easy to socialize in a cool and comfortable atmosphere.

With a developing preference for organic foods and sustainably farmed produce, Millennials embrace healthy, well-balanced meals, as long as they come in recyclable containers, don’t require cooking and don’t interfere with snacking or socializing!

Understanding the behaviours and preferences of Millennials is important for any foodservice operator. Winning over a group already so given to restaurant visits could mean sustainability for your establishment.

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*Linda Strachan is the director, Foodservice CD for The NPD Group has more than 25 years of experience providing reliable and comprehensive consumer-based market information to leaders in the foodservice industry. Powered by CREST®, NPD is the leading source for market information within the foodservice industry. For more information, visit [www.npd.com](http://www.npd.com)*



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# Here Comes THE SUN

A simple addition to your cocktail menu can make it a profitable patio season



As the cool breeze of spring gives way to the warm days of summer, inevitably our thoughts – and our customers' thoughts – turn to afternoons spent on patios, basking in the warm sunshine while sipping refreshing cocktails and chatting with friends.

Turning our customers' thoughts into reality doesn't have to be hard. In fact, setting up an effective and profitable summer cocktail menu shouldn't be over the top or complex at all. It should be uncomplicated and easy.

What belongs on a summer menu? The answer, drawing on the trend toward healthy eating, is anything and everything fresh! Seasonal fruits, herbs and berries help immensely when creating beverages that are both eye-catching and delicious. And considering the fact that many bartenders are shifting away from corn syrup-based post mixes and towards freshly squeezed juices, the line dividing the bar and the kitchen has become quite faint.

That said, knowing that your bartenders are going to be slammed as it is, you may only need to add one drink to your menu this summer: the Caipirinha (pronounced kai-pur-EEN-yah), a perfect example of cocktail synergy, the balance of a cocktail's strong, weak, sweet and sour components.

The national cocktail of Brazil, the Caipirinha is made with a sugarcane

based spirit called Cachaca (pronounced ka-SHA-sa) that tastes like a cross between white rum and tequila. Produced solely in Brazil where over 1.3-billion litres or 99 per cent of the spirit is consumed per year, Cachaca is the third largest spirit consumed globally, and the fastest growing spirit in the USA. Thanks to an increasing number of brands on the general list, Cachaca sales are also growing in Canada.

Entry level Cachaca starts at about \$25 per bottle, but spending a little more on a good quality liquid will bring your guests back for more. Leblon is one of the best known Cachacas, as it is very mixable and works well when you add fresh fruit and herbs to the mix.

To make a Caipirinha, simply cut half of a lime into four wedges and place in a lowball glass, add two teaspoons of white sugar and muddle until you have a syrupy mixture of

lime juice and sugar. Next, pour in two ounces of Cachaca, top with crushed ice – regular cubed ice will do in a pinch – stir and serve. When you have mastered the classic recipe, try adding berries and herbs like strawberry and basil, blackberries and kiwis or pineapple and mint.

Although the drink is relatively new in Canada, it has long been a staple in many bars around the globe. It's actually considered by many to be the grandfather of another summer refresher, the Mojito.

If you don't already have a Mojito program, it's definitely time to consider one. Thanks to its widespread popularity and similar ingredients, it is a great drink to transition customers into the Caipirinha.

When all is said and done, a simple summer cocktail like this can be profitable and easy to execute. Make sure your recipe is standardized and that your bartenders are executing them flawlessly. With the economy coming out of recession, and more people showing up cash-in-hand again, this could be one of the most profitable summers on record.

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Master mixologist **Gavin MacMillan** owns *BartenderOne Corp.*, Canada's leading group of bartender training schools. An award-winning bartender, bestselling author and blogger, he is considered one of Canada's leading authorities on cocktails and mixology. You can reach him at [gavin@bartenderone.com](mailto:gavin@bartenderone.com).





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# AUSTRALIA

The State of the Nation



Australia, for many a year, has been the vanguard of modern wine production, making some truly world-class bottlings that have been judged and scored highly in both the blind and structured format. It has also been testing the extreme limits of legitimate grape-growing areas, utilizing the most bleeding edge technologies to make those areas viable, and then having some of the most marketable front labels and back stories to help sell the juice. This was all well and good for the Canadian market, particularly at the licensee level. Isn't Australia the great success story?

Well, a few years ago it was all pretty easy wasn't it? Shove an inexpensive and good value Australian Shiraz or Chardonnay on your wine list, and the greedy-for-it punters would be gobbling it up like monkeys at a tea party... Shiraz-and-Chardonnay-guzzling monkeys for the most part. But things have changed quite drastically since those halcyon days of yore.

To be blunt, both the Australian wine in our marketplace and the Australian wine industry as a whole, are in a pretty difficult spot these days, and there are myriad reasons for this.

Some may argue that the two large international companies responsible for around 70 per cent of Australia's wine production are to blame. Others may point

the finger at a series of stellar harvests that left the country awash in more bulk wine than cute animal labels could possibly sell. Perhaps it was the truly awful vintage of 2007 that saw a 30 per cent drop in production due to disease, frost, and especially drought, with climactic oscillations having devastated much of the industry, causing serious supply issues regarding access to vine-potable/non-salinated water sources. And then we could always blame the kids coming up from behind; Chile, Argentina, South Africa, and to a certain degree, the newly vitalized France, snatching Australia's piece of the market share at a very particular price-point. Or could it simply be a matter of market saturation?

One thing is for sure, something has to be done. The Australians are certainly not a bunch to rest upon their laurels. Rather, they are a resourceful bunch with the ingredients to make some of the very best wines in the world. So what then are they up to these days?



## 1. TAKING A REGIONAL FOCUS

On the restaurant floor over the past 10 years, I have noticed a considerably more educated clientele who make a point of asking for a Barossa Shiraz, or a Yarra Valley Chardonnay, rather than the generic Shiraz or Chardonnay. And this is the way of the future. A word of warning though, staff training is paramount, as some clientele have very particular expectations when it comes to the S and C words.



## 2. EMPHASIZING SPECIFIC PRODUCERS

Rather than the huge brands that many customers worshiped previously, there is undoubtedly a shift towards them demanding particular producers within (or occasionally across) the aforementioned various regions of Australia.



### 3. MINDING MANIC ORGANICS...AND BIODYNAMICS

We have all observed an ever-growing trend of our diners demanding organically produced wines. In Australia this has not gone unnoticed. A huge number of superb winemakers are choosing to go green and follow that path.



### 4. UNVEILING THE NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK

For many years, some of the more experimental of Australian winegrowers have been playing around with some esoteric grape varieties outwith the Shiraz/Chardonnay axis, and to (in many cases) great success. Look for some amazing bottlings of Tempranillo, Nebbiolo, Barbera, Sangiovese, Viognier and Albarino coming from Australia sometime very soon.



### 5. CULTIVATING COOLER CLIMATE BURGUNDIAN VARIETALS

In some very specific cooler sites, a number of winemakers are crafting some damn fine Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. Look for wines from the Yarra Valley, Adelaide Hills, Mornington Peninsula, and Tasmania.

Don't let it ever be said that Australia is a two trick pony. Although it has been a difficult few years for Australia on the world market, things are certainly looking extremely positive for the years to come. The aforementioned issues surrounding water (and lack thereof) will certainly stymie any expansion of production, but some diversification within the industry itself, will undoubtedly lead to a broader and more steadfast market penetration. All of this means that we'll be seeing some really exciting wines on our shores in the coming months.

Ladies and Gentlemen, let me introduce the new Australia.

*Jamie Drummond is the Director of Programs/Editor of Good Food Revolution (www.goodfoodrev.com). And, as he writes, is cooped up in a garret in Bloomsbury Square, London, UK with a fractured tassel in his left foot.*



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BEVERAGE

# ORGANIC Alcohol





## 101

## A slow but sure beverage trend gains momentum

By Sarah Snowdon

While organic produce has secured its place in Canadian kitchens, organic alcohol has been a little slow out of the gates. According to the CRFA's 2010 Canadian Chef Survey, however, this trend is gearing up for takeoff. Organic alcohol is number four on the list of up-and-coming menu trends.

Whether you're an independent or chain operator, organic alcohol — if implemented in your beverage program wisely — can have a positive impact on both your bottom line and customer satisfaction. Given the growing consumer interest in organic beverages, a little knowledge about the subject is essential.

**ORGANIC BEER**

Although more expensive and time-consuming to produce, some breweries have used the organic label to carve out a niche for themselves in the extremely competitive beer market.

"Our top seller is our organic lager by a big margin," says Steve Abrams, co-founder of Mill Street Brewery, who reports sales split between 70 per cent retail and 30 per cent licensee. "It's also our flagship beer, our first brand."

Mill Street Brewery's initial marketing plan was directed towards women with children who purchased organic milk, strawberries, and other grocery staples. When customer feedback suggested that just as many husbands were drinking the beer, they needed to make a change. "As the popularity for organics grew, we realized we were getting a lot of customer feedback that the original bottle was too small. We switched sizes

a year and a half ago and have seen a 40 per cent increase in our sales," says Abrams.

With increases like that, it is obvious that organic is gaining popularity amongst beer drinkers, meaning that having an organic option on a beer list not only meets the growing demand, but ensures customers are satisfied.

Even in small independents, organic beer is becoming a first-choice for restaurateurs. "It flies off the shelves," offers Krista Raspor, co-owner of The Emmet Ray located in Toronto's trendy Ossington neighbourhood. "People recognize that it's organic, and that it's lower in alcohol and order it."

There is, however, a difference between certified organic and simply organic. Being certified organic is, by all accounts, an arduous undertaking. "There are certain restrictions we have to adhere to. It's not just the ingredients but how they're malted, and how they're brewed. It takes six weeks from start to finish for the organic lager, as opposed to one month for most craft-brewed lagers and even less time for major brewers," explains Abrams.

Despite the labourious production process, there are a few breweries that are up for the challenge and flourishing. "Our first year we sold 50,000 litres of beer and in our third year we sold

## Whether you're an independent or a chain, organic alcohol — if implemented in your beverage program wisely — can have a positive impact on both your bottom line and customer satisfaction.

500,000 litres — a ten-fold increase over two years,” says Steve Beauchesne, co-founder of Ottawa-based Beau's All Natural Brewing Company.

More than 70 per cent of Beau's sales are to restaurants, mostly chef-run independents, although they've had success in chains like Ottawa-area gourmet burger bistro The Works.

Beau's is a family-run, award-winning, organic, and DIY brewery, but their aim isn't to tout their organic panache. “We

want people to buy our beer because it tastes good, and it tastes good because we use the best ingredients. But it's not marketed as organic,” says Beauchesne.

Amidst the challenges of adhering to certified organic guidelines, including accessing malts, using environmentally friendly cleaners, and a rigorous record keeping process — all of which is audited by a certifier — Beauchesne says he'd rather spend

the money on doing the right thing than on marketing.

### ORGANIC WINE

The first organic alcoholic beverage was wine, produced by California-based family vintners. The idea of wine going organic has caught on in the U.S., where some wineries are not only organic and sulfur-free but biodynamic (based on anthroposophy, which includes understanding the ecological, the energetic, and the spiritual in nature).

In Canada, the organic wine trend has been slower to take off, although some small wineries are taking things to the next level. Thomas Bachelder, vineyard manager and winemaker at Le Clos Jordanne — an acclaimed certified organic vineyard in the Niagara region — notes the importance of sense of place. “Sommeliers and wine servers are really committed to the organic and biodynamic school of winemaking. They believe it gives wines a better sense of place; making wines that are more original,” says Bachelder.

Many certified organic vintners have a deep concern for the environment and future use of the land, which mirrors the increasing consumer demand for sustainable best practices with regards to the food and beverages they consume. “It's less about the marketing of the organics, and more about that we feel that organics equals stewardship of the land in terms of handing things over to the next generation in a better place than you got it,” offers Bachelder.

Some smaller wineries are doing a great job of being certified organic, but are distributing less based on available quantity. Rollingdale Winery near Westbank is one of two Okanagan wineries with organic





certification for its grapes and its winery (Summerhill is the other).

Rollingdale boasts 80 per cent on-site sales and 20 per cent retail and licensee sales. Positioning smaller wineries' quality over quantity is a win-win scenario among many independents and chef-run establishments.

According to Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO) Vice President of Vintages' fine wine and premium spirits business unit, Tom Wilson, the growing consumer demand is influencing the LCBO's purchasing. "Generally, we have more consumer interest and more suppliers moving into the organic realm," he says. "We will increase our assortment this year."

Organic wines are still in their early days in Canada, although some—like Balchelder—see this as only the beginning of a trend that will eventually reach a tipping point. "At a certain point the scale tips because the consumer will demand it and because the passionate grower insists on doing it for the respect of his or her land, or because it's indirectly legislated by forbidding super-nasty chemicals that made life easy," he says.

Either way, adding organic options to your wine menu will enable you to

accommodate the wishes of your customers, especially when every indication is that organic wine might become an industry staple.

#### ORGANIC SPIRITS

Production of organic products within the spirits industry was originally concentrated in the Cognac region of France where estate owners used organically grown grapes to create premium cognac.

Fast forward to the 1990s. Rain Organics vodka was created before there were certification regulations for the production of organic spirits, and labels were only required to list: Produced from Organically Grown Ingredients. In 1999, Organic Spirits Co. Ltd. was established in London, England, producing certified organic spirits such as Utkins UK5 Organic Vodka and Juniper Green Organic London Dry Gin.

Despite the fact that organic wines have been available for decades, distillers have been slow to adopt organic practices. With the spirits world dominated by multinationals, which rely on factory-farmed grains such as wheat, corn and rye, it's difficult and expensive to supply their

needs with organic grain. Boutique distilleries are emerging in the U.S., however, creating a burgeoning interest in organic spirits, especially amongst vodka consumers.

Among the growing number of certified organic spirits in Canada, 4 Copas organic tequila—the world's only certified organic tequila—is available in Nova Scotia, Alberta and Ontario.

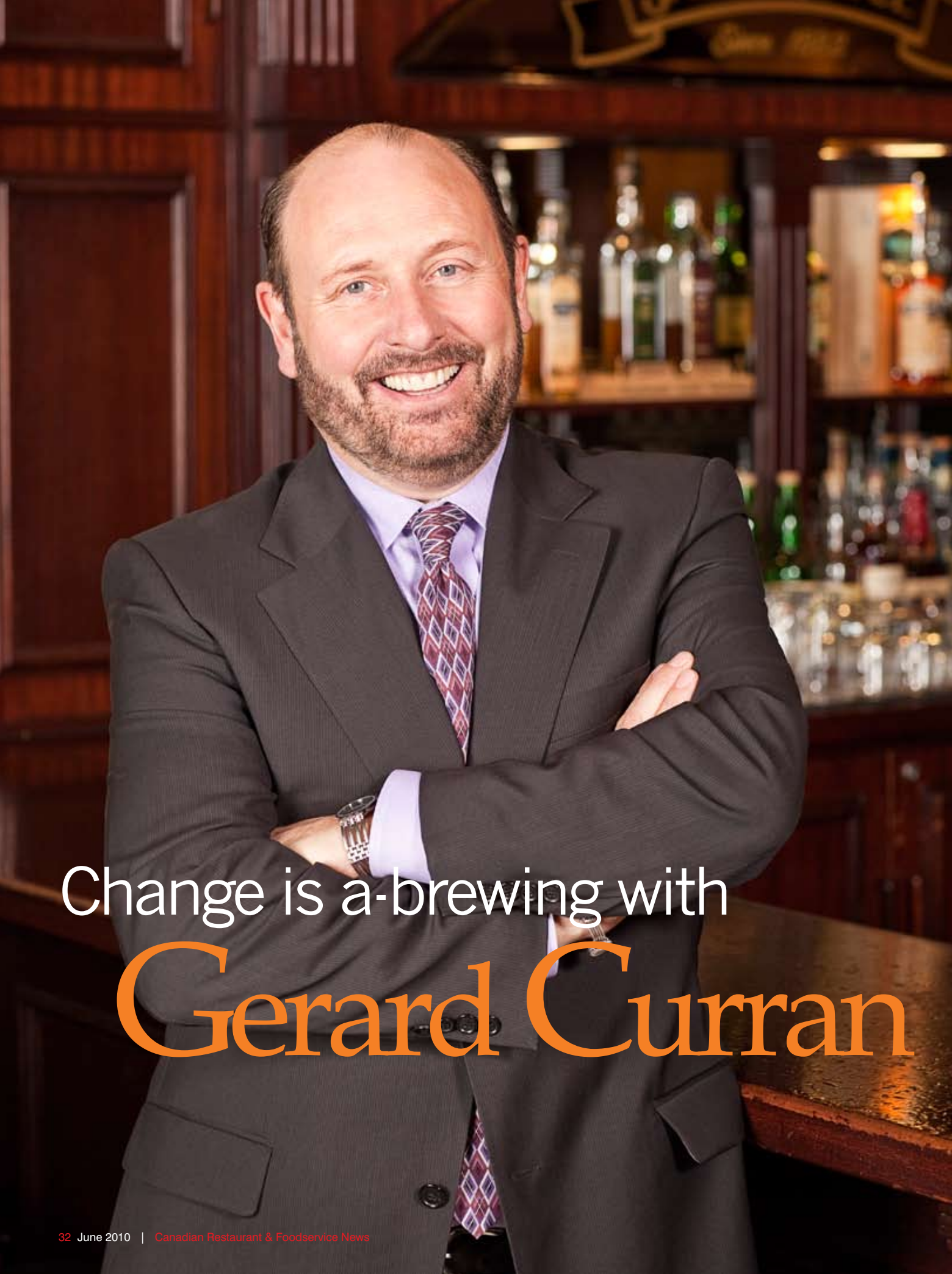
And how does it sell? "It sells itself," says Kathryn Smith, manager of Ryan Duffy's in Halifax, Nova Scotia. "We're actually changing our alcohol menu to go more organic because of it."

The trend of organic spirits, wine and beer is expanding slowly, but it is growing and presents a new sales opportunity for independent and chain establishments.

While many sommeliers and chef-run independents swear by organics for their quality and taste, they say there are many changes that need to happen at the government, retail, and consumer level in order for organic alcohol to flourish into a nation-wide trend.

How quickly these changes will take place is unknown, but in the meantime these unique wines, beers and spirits are worth exploring.





Change is a-brewing with

# Gerard Curran

By Prasanthi Vasanthakumar

## For CRFA's new chairman – and owner of Calgary's only authentic Irish pub – failure is a foreign word and change means something good.

Gerard Curran is always on the go. The newly elected chairman for the Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association has successfully run four businesses – including the James Joyce Irish Pub and Restaurant – and has a new venture in the works. In his first two months as CRFA's new leader, he's already made a difference. With his fearless attitude and passion for the industry, Curran shows that nothing is impossible.

As careers go, Gerard Curran's first love was the brewing industry. Growing up during a difficult time in Ireland, he worked in and out of pubs while finishing high school and college. A part-time position working with Guinness solidified his interest in beer, and by 16, he felt the stirrings of passion for the restaurant industry.

After immigrating to Edmonton with his wife Anne, at the age of 20, Curran took the position of general sales manager with a brewing company to learn how the business worked.

"I wanted to get into the corporate sector to understand as much as I physically could," he explains. "I needed that experience as a stepping stone for my own business. I had the passion and the desire, but I didn't have the experience in the food and beverage industry, so I had to learn the only way I knew, get out and do it."

Curran learnt fast and well – within three years he became the president and CEO of the \$30-million brewing company. After selling it years later, he launched his own consulting firm, building corporate experience and equity to make his restaurant dream a reality.

### RESEARCH, RESEARCH, RESEARCH

Finally in 1997, Curran was ready. It was the New Age of Irish pubs around the world, and he wanted his own place in Calgary. After copious

amounts of research – from food and customer tests to focus groups on suitable names – he and his wife opened the James Joyce Irish Pub and Restaurant at 114 8th Avenue S.W. in downtown Calgary.

"People kept asking me if I was ever going to open, and I would just say, 'No, I'm not going to open just yet, I need to do a little more research,'" says Curran. "When you put all your money into something, you only have one chance. I wanted to get it right."

### PINTS OF DIFFERENCE

And get it right he did. Curran worked with his wife who designed the pub. With imported Irish chandeliers and the best pint of Guinness in the country on tap, the 225-seat James Joyce makes its visitors feel like true Dubliners. He brewed up two types of Guinness pints to offer patrons a choice – the warmer Irish pint has different characteristics from its cooler North American counterpart.

"I had to be unique, because I knew other people would be following me,"

explains Curran. "Serving the best pints of Guinness was my point of difference."

### QUALITY AND CONTROL

Although he is obsessed with serving up quality, Curran is no micromanager. He views his pub as a business, unlike many owners that think they have to be present all the time.

"I didn't want an anchor around my neck," he says. "I put all the stop-gaps in place, so my wife and I are free to pursue other endeavours."

For Curran, these 'stop-gaps' include clear communication with his 40 employees, proper training and team-building, and a defined set of staff policies covering everything from maintaining consistency in food and plating to correct uniforms.

"If you work for me for a month or 10 years, I guarantee you will grow and learn as this industry is always changing, and I believe in keeping up with the market trends and never becoming stagnant."

“ I want to make it so that if you open a restaurant, you automatically become a CRFA member, because you can't afford not to be one. ”



Prime Minister Stephen Harper recently joined CRFA's Chairman Gerard Curran at the James Joyce Irish Pub and Restaurant for halibut fish and chips and a Diet Coke.

**AN INDUSTRY VISION**

Despite having a full plate, Curran happily added his CRFA leadership role to the mix and along with the new President Garth Whyte is looking forward to a busy and successful year.

As a proponent of change, Curran firmly believes in constantly shaking things up to stay ahead of the game. In his new role as Chairman, he wants to educate the government on the importance of the foodservice industry – something he's already taken steps

toward by putting CRFA's Alberta Show back on the map, an important event for the industry. Prime Minister Stephen Harper also recently stopped into the James Joyce to lunch with Curran, following a CRFA connection created last October, when the entire board and senior staff met with the Prime Minister in Ottawa.

Within CRFA, Curran wants to promote a members-first focus.

"I am all about CRFA membership," he explains. "CRFA is the body for lobbying and we need as many members as possible. I want to make it so that if you open a restaurant, you automatically become a member, because you can't afford not to be one."

*Prasanthi Vasanthakumar is CRFA's communications specialist. She can be reached at [pvasanthakumar@crfa.ca](mailto:pvasanthakumar@crfa.ca).*

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Top  
Trends

# 2010 Canadian Chef Survey

What can restaurant patrons expect to see on the menus of Canada's leading restaurants in 2010 and beyond? Answering this question was the main motive behind the first annual Canadian Chef Survey conducted by the Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association and BrandSpark International in collaboration with the Canadian Culinary Federation.

As a professional market researcher, most of my days are spent tapping into the minds of consumers, trying to uncover trends that will help leading companies better position their service and/or product offerings to meet buyer needs. To understand future menu trends, we took a slightly different approach with the CRFA Canadian Chef Survey, and went straight to the source of the menu innovation occurring in our restaurants today – the chefs.

The study collected chef opinions on a list of over 200 items in categories ranging from preparation methods to ingredients and menu items.

A few underlying themes are propelling these trends: health, nutrition and environmental consciousness.

For a while now, health and nutrition have been important issues for chefs and consumers alike. Chefs are indicating that this trend will continue to be a strong driver of menu innovation in the years to come, with four of the top 10 trends

1. Locally sourced foods
2. Sustainability
3. Organics
4. Artisanal cheeses
5. Simplicity / back to basics
6. Nutritional / healthy cuisine
7. Free-range poultry / pork
8. Small plates / tapas / mezze / dim sum
9. Bite size / mini desserts
10. Superfruits (e.g. acai, goji berry, mangosteen)

**Hot Trends**

1. Ancient grains (e.g. kamut, spelt, amaranth)
2. Gluten-free beer
3. Vegan entrées
4. Organic alcohol
5. African cuisine
6. New / fabricated cuts of meat
7. Gluten-free cuisine
8. Middle Eastern cuisine
9. Quinoa
10. Non-traditional fish (e.g. branzino, Arctic char, barramundi); Micro-distilled / artisan liquor; Meatless / vegetarian entrées

**Up and Comers**

1. Small plates / tapas / mezze / dim sum
2. Inexpensive / underused cuts of meat (e.g. beef cheek, brisket, pork shoulder, skirt steak)
3. Half portions / smaller portions for smaller price
4. Specialty / gourmet sandwiches
5. Gourmet burgers / build-your-own burgers

**Menu Trends**

1. Sous vide
2. Liquid nitrogen chilling / freezing
3. Smoking
4. Braising
5. Cooking with tea

**Preparation Methods**

1. Ethnic fusion
2. Regional ethnic cuisine
3. Southeast Asian (e.g. Thai, Vietnamese, Burmese, Malaysian)
4. Indian
5. Middle Eastern

**Ethnic Cuisines and Flavours**

1. Artisanal cheeses
2. Ethnic condiments (e.g. raita, raitha, chimichurri, Sriracha, chutney, soy sauce)
3. Flatbreads (e.g. naan, papadum, lavash, pita, tortilla)
4. Ancient grains (e.g. kamut, spelt, amaranth)
5. Charcuterie

**Sides**

1. Mini-burgers
2. Amuse bouche
3. Appetizer combos / platters
4. Edamame
5. Asian appetizers (e.g. tempura, spring rolls/egg rolls, satay, dumplings)

**Appetizers / Starters**

1. Locally grown fruits
2. Bite-size / mini desserts
3. Dessert flights / combos / platters
4. Sweet and salty desserts
5. Drinkable desserts

**Desserts**

relating to perceived healthier choices: organics, nutritional healthy cuisine, free-range poultry/pork, and superfruits. Not only has this overall trend strengthened in recent years, it is likely to continue into the future, as chefs believe that vegan entrées, gluten-free products and the integration of grains (specifically ancient grains) will be the big trends of the future.

While talk about healthier menu items continues to be prominent, these trends should not be taken as a signal to move away from indulgent items, as there is definitely a place on menus for these highly coveted meals. What these trends suggest is that restaurants must continue to be cognizant of the fact that the decision to visit a restaurant depends on the appetite of the entire party, and that the availability of healthy items is increasingly a key decision criteria and a way to keep your restaurant in the consideration set of restaurant goers.

The influence of environmental consciousness and responsibility is clearly on the minds of chefs, as the top three trends all benefit the environment in some way. In addition to supporting local economies, locally sourced foods are likely to reduce the carbon footprint left by distribution systems that transport many products available in restaurants across thousands of kilometres every day. One of the main benefits of the sustainable food movement is that it ensures food is harvested in a manner that reduces negative impact on

our environment and the systems supporting it. Organically grown food is beneficial to the earth as the procedure omits the use of pesticides from the growing process.

While demand for environmentally friendly products is on the rise, restaurants will need to be cautious with how much emphasis is placed on its benefits versus the primary benefits of visiting restaurants – to eat great tasting food.

One of the challenges that chefs and restaurant owners will face as they integrate local, sustainable and organic products onto their menus is convincing consumers that the benefit outweighs the cost – that they will be receiving good value for money.

Chefs have a strong grasp of the need to deliver high value in return for what the consumer is spending. In fact, 91 per cent have stated that ‘value for money’ is becoming more of a concern when designing menu items. This mindset will need to be applied when crafting a communication strategy that highlights the benefits related to these trends.

Research conducted by BrandSpark International indicates that highlighting environmental may not provide restaurateurs the positive financial returns that may be expected. Our research has found that most consumers are not

willing to pay a premium for products that are environmentally friendly. In fact, consumers believe that the supplier should pay for the increased cost required to produce and deliver a product considered to be environmentally friendly.

To get these messages to consumers, chefs and restaurant owners should link the use of locally grown, sustainable or organic products with at least one of the main reasons people are going out to eat at restaurants in the first place: to eat great tasting food. Consumers need to hear how these products make the food fresher, tastier and healthier before they will pay the premium. Leading with the environmental benefits will typically end up with consumers asking, “What’s in it for me?”

For restaurants that cater to the general population of restaurant patrons and feature locally sourced, sustainable or organic items, prioritize messaging strategies so that your primary message focuses on how great the food tastes and how fresh it is. Follow up with a secondary message that communicates that the food you serve not only tastes better, but is also grown locally, sustainably and is organic.

*Mark Baltazar is Vice President and Partner and BrandSpark International, a market research and brand strategy firm with expertise in the restaurant industry. Mark can be reached via email: mbaltazar@brandspark.ca*





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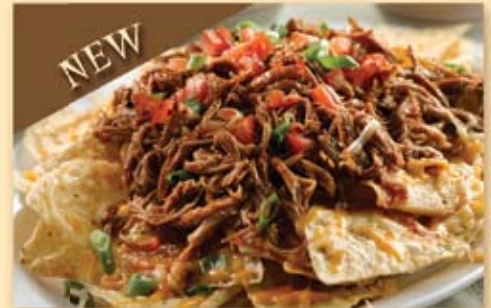
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# CRFA News

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



More than any other industry, foodservice is affected by trends. From flavours to food preparation, and from interior design to technology, foodservice operators have to know the trends and understand how they relate to their business.

At CRFA we're working to help you stay a step ahead. This issue of *Canadian Restaurant & Foodservice News* is filled with resources for our members:

- CRFA's annual *Foodservice Facts* magazine gives you the stats, facts and analysis to understand how this industry is evolving, how consumers are changing, and how you can capitalize on those changes.
- The results of our first-ever Canadian Chef's Survey reveal the top food and beverage trends on the menu today, as well as the up-and-comers.
- And our pocket fact book provides you with a handy reference tool on the size and scope of our industry.

With the pace of change today, you need business tools and information at your fingertips. To that end, CRFA will soon launch a brand new website for foodservice operators - the first of its kind in Canada, and one that we hope will become a daily resource to help you run your business. Watch for more information at [www.crfa.ca](http://www.crfa.ca).

We are also partnering with MediaEdge Communications, publisher of this magazine, on an exciting new event for the foodservice industry in Alberta, adding to a line-up of successful CRFA trade shows in Toronto (CRFA Show), Vancouver (BC Foodservice Expo) and Atlantic Canada (ApEx). Watch for more details about the Alberta event, coming to Calgary in October, 2010.

After all, this is a people business, and we understand the need to bring colleagues together to network and exchange ideas and insights. That's when trends come to life and solutions come to light.

I encourage you to take full advantage of the information and insights that are available to you as a CRFA member, and to let us know how we can better meet your needs. Staying on top of the trends is a priority for us too.

Garth Whyte  
President and CEO  
Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association

In the first issue of CRFN magazine I wrote about the work CRFA is doing to educate government about our industry, and why it's important to the economy and to communities across Canada. Recent letters to CRFA from Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty and Nova Scotia Premier Darrell Dexter make it clear that our message is getting through. I'm pleased to share them with you:

*"My colleagues and I recognize - and deeply value - the many vital contributions of Ontario's restaurant and foodservice industry to building prosperity in our province - from the jobs it creates to its positive economic impact on the allied industries of agriculture, transportation and manufacturing. And it is a powerful force in supporting our travel and tourism sector.*

*I commend the CRFA for its tireless support of its membership and for being the proactive voice of the restaurant and foodservices industry. Through its research reports, educational resources, conferences and trade shows, this fine association gives its members the strategic advantage they need to address today's economic realities - and to flourish in this demanding and competitive sector of the economy."*

Dalton McGuinty  
Premier of Ontario  
March 8, 2010

*"The foodservice industry's significant role in Nova Scotia's economic and social fabric is well understood and recognized by my government. After all, your industry's success is our success. Restaurants are at the heart of virtually every community in Nova Scotia. CRFA members provide an important place for Nova Scotians to gather with family and friends, are major supporters of community events, sports activities and charities. Nova Scotia foodservice operators showcase Nova Scotian food products, musical talents and ingenuity, making the industry a top draw for tourists and locals alike. Restaurants also offer more opportunities for our young people to build essential skills than does any industry in the province. The industry's contribution to the well being of Nova Scotian communities is appreciated.*

*I well understand that like many other industries, foodservice has been dealing with significant challenges in recent years. The industry has demonstrated its resilience and ability to meet challenges by embracing innovation and change. CRFA has been at the forefront and has been a tireless advocate on behalf of its members. I value the information and research provided to my government and I want to build on this strong working relationship in order to make Nova Scotia a better place to live and work."*

Darrell Dexter  
Premier of Nova Scotia  
April 20, 2010

**VISIT [WWW.CRFA.CA](http://WWW.CRFA.CA) TO  
READ THE FULL LETTERS**



## MEET CRFA'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR 2010 - 2011

At the Annual General Meeting in March, CRFA members elected a new Chairman and Board of Directors for 2010 – 2011.

CRFA is governed by a Board of Directors representing every province and every sector of the foodservice industry. These industry leaders volunteer their time to represent the view and interests of foodservice operators and oversee the association's strategic direction.

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



**Gerard Curran**  
The James Joyce  
Irish  
Pub and  
Restaurant  
Calgary, AB  
*Chairman  
of the Board*



**Warren Erhart**  
White Spot  
Restaurants  
Vancouver, BC  
*First Vice Chairman  
and Chairman,  
Government Affairs  
(National) Committee*



**Donna Dooher**  
The Mildred  
Pierce Group  
Toronto, ON  
*Vice Chairman and  
Chairman,  
Government Affairs  
(Regional) Committee*



**Susan Senecal**  
A&W Food Services  
of Canada Inc.  
North Vancouver, BC  
*Vice Chairman and  
Chairman, Member  
Products Committee*

Gerard Curran, owner of James Joyce Irish Pub in Calgary, is the Chairman of the Board for 2010-2011. To learn more about Curran see *Change is a-brewing* with Gerard Curran on page 32.



**Kevin Friesen**  
Imvescor Restaurant  
Group Inc.  
Moncton, NB  
*Secretary and  
Chairman, Marketing  
and  
Communications  
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**Roland Walton**  
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Claddagh Oyster House/Olde  
Dublin Pub  
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**Lee Gonsalves**  
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& Shark Clubs of Canada  
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**Frank Grisanti**  
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Aramark Healthcare  
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**Chris Tzaneteas**  
Chrisco Restaurants Ltd.  
Halifax, NS

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

### ► FEDERAL

#### IMPORTANT STEPS TO REIN IN CREDIT CARD COMPANIES

CRFA has been pressuring the government to address unfair business practices by payment card companies, particularly on the introduction of new debit card products and unreasonable credit card fees. The federal government has responded by introducing a Code of Conduct for Canada's credit and debit card industry and appointing the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada (FCAC) to monitor compliance.

The new *Payment Cards Network Act* expands the FCAC's mandate and empowers the Minister of Finance to regulate the payment systems market. Card companies, processors and financial institutions now face penalties of up to \$200,000 for failure to comply with the Act.

The government will also appoint an independent task force to review the Canadian payment system and make recommendations by the end of 2011. The task force will review:

- the safety, soundness and efficiency of the payments system;
- whether there is sufficient innovation in the system;
- the competitive landscape;
- whether business and consumers are well served; and
- whether current payment system oversight mechanisms remain appropriate.

The measures outlined above and the Code of Practice are important steps to address the concerns of CRFA members.

#### CRFA SPEAKS OUT AGAINST EI PREMIUM HIKE

Of huge concern to CRFA members is the prospect of premium increases of \$0.21 per \$100 of payroll - the maximum permitted under EI legislation - for the next four to five years.

The federal government says it won't raise taxes to return to a balanced budget. In the 2010 budget, however, Ottawa is relying heavily on EI increases to meet its deficit reduction targets. CRFA is emphasizing to government that EI premiums are not only a tax, but the worst form of taxation because they are profit-insensitive, regressive and a tax on hiring.

A \$13 to \$15-billion deficit is expected in the new EI fund by the end of this year due to the 40 per cent increase in the unemployment rate during the economic downturn. Some benefit enhancements from the government's stimulation package will not be paid from EI revenues, whereas other benefits, like coverage for the self-employed, will. Due to pressure from CRFA and other organizations, EI rates have been frozen since 2008.



Foodservice operators already reeling from significant mandated increases to labour costs in tough economic times will be unable to tolerate an 8.6 per cent hike in payroll taxes. CRFA is urging government to again usurp the rate-setting powers of the EI Financing Board to moderate payroll tax increases.

#### EI PREMIUMS: WHAT TO EXPECT FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

Year	Employee Rate	Employer Rate	Employer Rate Increase
2010	\$1.73	\$2.42	N/A
2011	\$1.88	\$2.63	\$0.21
2012	\$2.03	\$2.84	\$0.21
2013	\$2.18	\$3.05	\$0.21
2014	\$2.33	\$3.26	\$0.21

“Hidden in today’s budget is the government’s plan to significantly raise employment insurance rates - which means employers will be paying a much higher price to create new jobs... Higher EI premiums will cost the restaurant and foodservice industry nearly \$30 million a year starting in 2011.”

- CRFA's Garth Whyte in media interviews on EI premiums, March 2010

« LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

## SODIUM REDUCTION GOALS

The federal Sodium Working Group (SWG) has announced new targets aimed at helping Canadians to shake the salt habit. CRFA is an active member of the SWG, which was formed by Health Canada two years ago to develop a national sodium reduction strategy.

Currently, the average Canadian consumes 3,400 mg of sodium daily. The SWG wants to see this lowered to 2,300 mg per day by 2016 - a drop of five per cent per year, for a total of 30 per cent over the next six years. The ultimate goal is to reduce the average Canadian sodium intake to the "adequate intake" (AI) level of 1,500 mg per day - an ambitious outcome if other countries' experiences are any guide.

The SWG Terms of Reference call for a three-pronged strategy:

- sodium reductions in the food supply (i.e. new product development and reformulations);
- education and awareness; and
- research.

If a voluntary approach is to succeed, all three prongs must work together, including lower sodium levels in the Canadian food supply.

Health Canada will consult with industry this spring and summer on draft product category (menu item) targets for foodservice. CRFA member companies will be asked to work with Health Canada on establishing reasonable goals.

Next year, Health Canada will publish foodservice sodium reduction targets, and a final SWG report is expected by June 2010 with recommendations to the Minister of Health.

## ▶ ATLANTIC CANADA

### NOVA SCOTIA'S HST TAKES A HARMFUL HIKE

Despite opposition from CRFA and the business community, the harmonized sales tax (HST) will increase from 13 to 15 per cent effective July 1, 2010, as government takes aim at Nova Scotia's large deficit. The budget also includes a new tax bracket for high-income earners and a minor reduction in the Small Business Corporate tax rate from 5 to 4.5 per cent.

The HST increase particularly concerns restaurateurs because it reduces consumers' disposable income and worsens the unequal tax treatment of food in restaurants versus grocery stores.

CRFA has also highlighted that the province's high level of personal and corporate taxes discourages investment and economic growth.

### PREMIER DEXTER COMES TO APEX

Nova Scotia Premier Darrell Dexter got a taste of the foodservice industry's size and scope when he attended ApEx 2010. During personalized tours of the trade show by CRFA staff and directors, Premier Dexter and several ministers met with local restaurateurs and chefs, recognized longstanding exhibitors, and launched the show's signature culinary battle, Chef Wars.

### PROGRESS ON WAGE DIFFERENTIALS IN NEW BRUNSWICK

In response to CRFA's industry petition for wage differentials, government has asked the Minimum Wage Review Board to make recommendations on the issue. CRFA will meet with the Board and continue lobbying for differentials. Meanwhile, PEI has rejected wage differentials, despite CRFA's lobbying campaign.

## Shaking the Habit

Average sodium intake  
per person in Canada: 3,400 mg  
(1.5 teaspoons of salt)  
Goal by 2016: 2,300 mg  
(1 teaspoon of salt)  
Ultimate goal: 1,500 mg  
(0.6 teaspoons of salt)



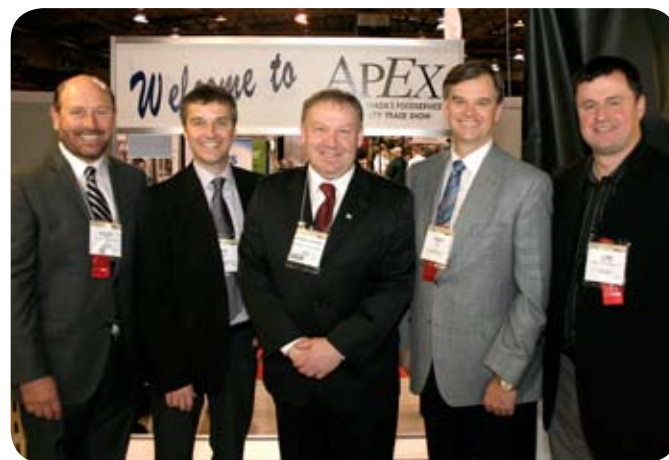
The industry has been recognized for actively engaging in sodium reduction, but more work is needed to gradually reduce Canadians' overall sodium intake for improved health. CRFA will continue to work as a key food industry representative on the SWG to ensure recommendations to the Minister are voluntary, reasonable and achievable.



**Joyce Reynolds** is CRFA's Executive Vice President of Government Affairs. She can be contacted at 416-923-8416 ext. 4219 or jreynolds@crfa.ca.



**Ron Reaman** is CRFA's Vice President, Federal. He can be reached at 416-923-8416 ext. 4242 or rreaman@crfa.ca.



CRFA Chairman Gerard Curran (left to right), Luc Erjavec, Premier Dexter, Garth Whyte and CRFA Director Chris Tzaneteas.



**Luc Erjavec** is CRFA's vice president for Atlantic Canada. He can be reached at 1-877-755-1938 or luc@crfa.ca.

**Jane Beeton** is Atlantic Canada's membership representative. Contact Jane at 1-866-747-3491 or jane.crfa@gmail.com.



► **QUEBEC**



CRFA President Garth Whyte (right) explains the importance of the foodservice industry in a meeting with Oliver Marcil, an advisor to Premier Jean Charest.

**A NEW POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR STEWARDSHIP PROGRAMS**

Governments across Canada want to shift the responsibility for waste reduction from municipalities to the producers of waste. Quebec is the first province to introduce extended producer responsibility (EPR) legislation.

The recently tabled Bill 88 imposes 100 per cent of the net costs of managing recycling, or the blue box program, on business owners. Previous legislation divided the net costs equally between industry (including restaurants) and municipalities.

CRFA has pushed to restrict net costs to collection, transport and treatment of recycled material. Administration costs, estimated at 20 per cent, have been excluded. This exclusion allows industry to share recycling

program management and accountability with municipalities. CRFA is also fighting to phase in the cost responsibility, starting with 70 per cent in 2010 and progressing to the full 100 per cent in 2015.

In late April, Stewardship Quebec appeared at a Parliamentary Commission to state its position. However, municipal pressure could push forward the phase-in period to 2013 from 2015.

**QUEBEC REVISITS CRFA'S NATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM**

CRFA's National Food Safety Training Program (NFSTP) may gain recognition in Quebec, thanks to a new labour mobility agreement between Quebec and Ontario,

Despite CRFA's ongoing efforts, Quebec is the only province that does not recognize national programs such as the NFSTP. National recognition is critical for many restaurants, especially chains that prefer to use one training program across Canada.

Responding to pressure from CRFA, the Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, or MAPAQ (Ministere de l'Agriculture, des Pecheries et de l'Alimentation du Quebec), has offered to resolve this issue through an exemption for national programs that meet MAPAQ standards. A solution is expected in June.



**Jean Lefebvre** is CRFA's vice president for Quebec. He can be reached at 514-448-2154 or [jlefebvre@crfa.ca](mailto:jlefebvre@crfa.ca).

► **ONTARIO**

**PUSHING FOR NEW THINKING ON MINIMUM WAGE**

With an overwhelming response from restaurant operators across the province, CRFA delivered over 1,600 signed petitions as part of its campaign to ask government to rethink minimum wages in Ontario. CRFA would like to thank all participants for their outstanding support on this issue.

On March 31, 2010, minimum wage rose to \$10.25/hr - the highest in the country. With this increase, the government fulfilled its 2007 commitment to increase general minimum wage to \$10.25/hr. Liquor server and student wages also rose to \$8.90/hr and \$9.60/hr respectively.

Despite these increases, CRFA has successfully laid the groundwork for a new process for future minimum wage decisions in Ontario. We have highlighted both the importance of differentials and the industry's need for a freeze in general minimum wage rates in 2011. CRFA will continue to press this issue throughout the year.



CRFA President Garth Whyte (left) and Stephanie Jones (right) meet with Tim Hudak, Leader of the Official Opposition in Ontario.

“[The] suggestion that the mandated 8 per cent increase in Ontario’s minimum wage will have a negligible effect on restaurant owners is outrageous. It will cost the restaurant industry \$255-million annually. Ironically, this comes on the heels of Ontario’s budget announcement that it will freeze its own payroll costs.”

- Stephanie Jones on minimum wage, The Globe and Mail, April 1, 2010

«LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

### PUTTING INDUSTRY ISSUES ON THE TABLE

CRFA met with Tim Hudak, Leader of the Official Opposition in Ontario, to discuss the state of the province's restaurant industry. Issues such as the minimum wage, liquor pricing and the growing regulatory burden on restaurants were put on the table.

In a letter to CRFA, Hudak writes:

"I have always appreciated the benefit of the CRFA's insight and extensive research. I look forward to working with you and your members to restore a welcoming business environment for investment in the hospitality sector. With thanks, Tim Hudak."

### CRFA RESPONDS TO BAD NEWS BUDGET

For Ontario restaurants, any budget benefits will be stripped away by the minimum wage increase that will cost operators \$255 million annually.

In media interviews, CRFA noted the 2010 Ontario budget unfairly allows the government to control its own payroll costs, while forcing restaurateurs to swallow a huge increase in minimum wage during a tough economy.

In the budget, the government confirmed its plans to increase general minimum wage as part of its anti-poverty reduction strategy. No move was made to seek new revenue from the sale of public assets or privatization of the Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO).

## ▶ MANITOBA-SASKATCHEWAN

### SIMPLIFYING MANITOBA'S BEVERAGE ALCOHOL SYSTEM

CRFA recently met with Gord Mackintosh, Minister of Family Services and Consumer Affairs, to discuss the importance of Manitoba's liquor licensees to the province's economy. CRFA is working with the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission (MLCC) to reduce red tape and licensing challenges for licensees.

Following the release of the 2009 Youth Health Survey, Mackintosh announced he would implement tough penalties for those who facilitate and participate in underage drinking. CRFA will represent licensees in ongoing discussions on how to address underage drinking and substance abuse in the province.



CRFA Honorary Fellow Doug Stephen (right) speaks with Manitoba Minister of Consumer Affairs Gord Mackintosh at a foodservice industry reception for MLAs in May.

This budget is effectively a summary document of initiatives introduced by the McGuinty government during its current term. Changes to corporate and small business taxes, as well as personal income tax relief - all announced in 2009 - were reiterated to support introduction of the HST, the largest provincial sales tax revision in Ontario in decades. The HST takes effect July 1, 2010.

CRFA offers a number of online tools to help you assess how the HST will affect your business and menu prices. Visit [www.crfa.ca](http://www.crfa.ca).



**Stephanie Jones** is CRFA's vice president in Ontario. She can be reached at 416-923-8416 ext. 4243 or [sjones@crfa.ca](mailto:sjones@crfa.ca).

CRFA's membership representatives for Ontario include:

- **Kim Hill** (Northern Ontario /Ottawa Region) at 1-866-431-5456 or [kim.crfa@gmail.com](mailto:kim.crfa@gmail.com);
- **Karen Samson** (Mississauga and Central Ontario) at 1-866-551-0147 or [karen.samson@rogers.com](mailto:karen.samson@rogers.com);
- **Randy Jackson** (GTA Central) at 416-929-1142 or [randy.crfa@gmail.com](mailto:randy.crfa@gmail.com); and
- **Vida Sinclair** (Toronto) at 416-226-9258 or [vida.crfa@bell.net](mailto:vida.crfa@bell.net).

### BUDGET UPDATES

#### Manitoba

Although Manitoba's budget eliminated the Small Business Tax, which will save the province's businesses \$14 million, the 2010 minimum wage increase will wipe out these potential savings. In 2009, the two 25-cent increases in minimum wage added approximately \$16 million to labour costs for foodservice operators alone.

Manitoba also announced it would be running budget deficits for the next five years due to the recession.

#### Saskatchewan

In addition to including a deficit for the next two years, Saskatchewan's budget announced that beverage alcohol prices were increasing between 50 and 75 cents on most Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority (SLGA) items as of April 1. CRFA is lobbying the province for measures to offset the impact of this price increase on operators.

**"Yet another wage increase of this magnitude will hurt the very people it is intended to help."**

- Courtney Hirota, CBC.ca, April 8, 2010



**Courtney Hirota** is CRFA's vice president for Manitoba-Saskatchewan. She can be reached at 1-877-926-8557 or [chirota@crfa.ca](mailto:chirota@crfa.ca).

► **WESTERN CANADA**

**CRFA MEETS ALBERTA'S NEW EMPLOYMENT AND IMMIGRATION MINISTER**

Recently, CRFA met with Alberta's new Employment and Immigration Minister Thomas Lukaszuk to outline the importance of the foodservice industry to the province's economy.

CRFA formally thanked the Government of Alberta for freezing the minimum wage for 2009 and agreeing to review minimum wage policy. We reiterated the need for training and gratuity wage differentials and a new minimum wage policy that provides stable and predictable entry level wages for Alberta's foodservice industry.

Minister Lukaszuk provided more information regarding the all-party review of minimum wage to take place later this year. Watch for more information about the minimum wage policy review and how you can participate.

CRFA also raised concerns with the Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program's rules for both cooks and the foodservice industry semi-skilled pilot project. Additionally, CRFA pushed for changes to WorkSafe Alberta's Certificate of Recognition (COR) Program to encourage more foodservice industry participation. The Minister agreed to follow up on these concerns.



CRFA's President Garth Whyte (left), Director David Aisenstat (right) and Mark von Schellwitz (far right) meet with B.C. Premier Gordon Campbell.

**CRFA DISCUSSES HST AND INDUSTRY VISION WITH B.C. PREMIER**

British Columbia Premier Gordon Campbell has agreed to work with CRFA to develop a common vision for the foodservice industry and to help foodservice operators adjust to the HST.

In a recent meeting with Premier Campbell, CRFA reiterated the industry's HST concerns and called on the province to partner with us on solutions that help B.C.'s foodservice industry adjust to the new tax. We outlined the need for a shared vision to ensure the foodservice industry survives and thrives as a key component of the provincial economy.

A few weeks later, Premier Campbell toured the BC Foodservice Expo and gained a better understanding of the industry's innovation and economic impact.



CRFA's Director Lee Gonsalves (left), newly elected Chairman Gerard Curran (second left), Mark von Schellwitz (second right) and Past Director Barry Arndt (right) meet with Minister Thomas Lukaszuk (centre).

**"Employment Minister Thomas**

**Lukaszuk deserves credit for his decision to freeze Alberta's minimum wage in 2010...Yet another minimum wage increase during the current economic downturn would have further ratcheted up all wages, leading to layoffs, reduced hours of work, fewer gratuities, and therefore less income for thousands of Albertans."**

Mark von Schellwitz on Alberta's minimum wage, Calgary Herald, Feb.14, 2010



**Mark von Schellwitz** is CRFA's Western Canada vice president. He can be reached at 1-866-300-7675 or by e-mail at mark@crfa.ca. CRFA's membership representatives include:

- **Brenda Dickson** (Vancouver and Surrounding Area) at 1-866-895-8416 or bd\_crfa@telus.net;
- **Greg Thalheimer** (British Columbia Interior) at 1-877-450-4022 or gthalheimer.crfa@live.com; and
- **Lil Mooney** (Alberta/Northwest Territories) at 1-877-209-1680 or crfacalgary@shaw.ca.

«LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



► **CRFA MEMBER PROFILE:**

## **LAUREN MENTIPLAY, THE FAINTING GOAT, REGINA**



### **At a Glance**

**Restaurant:** The Fainting Goat

**Menu Theme:** North African, Middle Eastern, Indian, Mediterranean flavours with a Saskatchewan twist.

**Opened:** Sept. 9, 2009

**Seats:** 36 inside, 24 outside

**Employees:** 20

**Most Popular Menu Item at the Moment:** La Ronge pickerel with citrus aioli and wild rice and potato pancakes

**Most Memorable Moment:** Being voted 'Best Restaurant in Regina' in Prairie Dog newspaper's annual survey.

Mentiplay's planning paid off. Since its opening, The Fainting Goat has been wildly successful.

Located at 2330 Albert Street in Regina, Saskatchewan, the restaurant's menu boasts rustic gourmet fare with Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, North African and Indian flavours. Intriguing dishes include naan pizzas, bison kebabs and fittingly, fainting goat samosas.

But the cornerstone of Mentiplay's menu has always been Saskatchewan-grown products. Despite challenges that stem from the province's short growing season, she manages to source all her wheat, grains, beans and lentils locally. With the exception of Quebec duck, The Fainting Goat's meat also comes entirely from Saskatchewan.

In addition to cultivating a local focus, Mentiplay has played with the idea of fashioning a more female-friendly menu.

"I find that most restaurant menus, particularly in Regina, are made by men for men," she says. "My son and I have worked hard to create balanced menus that provide unique meat-and-potato choices as well as lighter or vegetarian options. The response from women in particular has been overwhelming - and where women go, men will follow!"

The opportunity to work with her son on menu design and restaurant management is an added benefit for Mentiplay. She cherishes the extra time she now has with her children, their friends and her community. However, Mentiplay cautions that working with family is not always fun and games.

"Because we're such a close-knit group, personal issues can get in the way," she explains. "Sometimes it's hard to discipline friends and family."

But Mentiplay's biggest obstacles have come from external factors like financial institutions and certain government legislative policies.

"When you open a business, everyone - including the government - wants a piece of you," she says.

With almost 20 employees, Mentiplay's greatest challenge has been maintaining a skilled and motivated workforce, especially in the kitchen. Despite The Fainting Goat's success, she has found it difficult to compete for talent with larger establishments and chains.

In anticipation of such challenges, Mentiplay joined CRFA even before The Fainting Goat officially opened its doors.

"I feel it is important to be part of a professional organization and the CRFA does a lot of important work on our behalf," she says. "As a member, I am informed of latest industry trends and issues through the association's newsletters and trade shows. I also see them lobbying for the industry."

For the first time, Mentiplay attended the 2010 CRFA Show in March. Not only did she make valuable business contacts, but she also got the chance to go out and enjoy some of Toronto.

So what's next for her? Mentiplay has a new line of sauces in the works, which she is hoping to launch for retail sale by early fall.

Owned and operated by Chef Lauren Mentiplay, The Fainting Goat in Regina's Cathedral Village community focuses on rustic gourmet fare, local products and 'female-friendly' menu choices.

Lauren Mentiplay has always been fascinated by goats - especially fainting goats. That's why she gave this catchy name to the first-ever restaurant she has owned and operated as a chef.

Mentiplay opened The Fainting Goat last September, after finally ending her on and off relationship with the finance industry. Although her first job was in foodservice - she worked at Kentucky Fried Chicken (now known as KFC) as a teenager - Mentiplay fell into banking after graduating from high school.

"I come from a family background where office work is what one aspires to do," she explains. "However, I found the work emotionally draining and physically debilitating. It became clear after a time that I needed to break out and do something truer to myself and my passions."

At 47, Mentiplay decided to follow her heart and attended Vancouver's Pacific Institute of Culinary Arts (PICA). After completing the Chef program, she extensively researched the ins and outs of opening her own restaurant, seeking advice from lawyers, accountants and business colleagues. Her son, who is also Fainting Goat's general manager, helped with the early legwork.

**"I feel it is important to be part of a professional organization and the CRFA does a lot of important work on our behalf."**

## ▶ HST CHECKLIST

Is your business ready for the HST? This new tax replaces provincial and federal sales taxes and takes effect on July 1, 2010 in Ontario and British Columbia.

### HOW THE HST AFFECTS YOUR CUSTOMERS:

#### CURRENT SALES TAXES

##### ONTARIO

Restaurant meals are subject to the 5% GST plus 8% PST.

Restaurant transactions of \$4.00 or less are exempt from the 8% PST.

Beer, wine or spirits purchased from a licensee are taxed at 5% GST and 10% provincial LST.

#### HARMONIZED SALES TAX (JULY 1, 2010)

The GST and PST are replaced by the 13% Harmonized Sales Tax (HST).

Restaurant transactions of \$4.00 or less are exempt from the provincial portion of the HST and taxed at 5%.

Beer, wine or spirits purchased from a licensee are taxed at 13% (HST).

##### BRITISH COLUMBIA

Restaurant meals are subject to the 5% GST, but they are exempt from the 7% PST.

Beer, wine or spirits purchased from a licensee are taxed at 5% GST and 10% provincial LST.

The GST and PST are replaced by the 12% Harmonized Sales Tax (HST). The HST will apply to all restaurant meals.

Beer, wine or spirits purchased from a licensee are taxed at 12% (HST).

### TRANSITION ISSUES:

The transitional rules for BC and Ontario were published by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) on Oct. 14, 2009. You must be a registered business with the CRA by May 1, 2010 to be eligible for small business transition funding. Cheques will be issued automatically based on 2009 sales volumes.

As of May 1, 2010, HST applies on the consideration for certain property and services provided by business on or after July 1, 2010. Service contracts must have been signed before May 1 to avoid paying the HST.

As of May 1, if you are booking events or services to be provided at a future date, ensure your pricing reflects the liquor and tax price changes that take effect July 1, 2010.

### HST CHECKLIST:

- Contact your suppliers to ensure the savings they will accrue through HST input tax credits are passed on to you.
- Update your accounting systems and cash registers for HST rates.
- Contact your POS supplier to ensure systems are updated for any POS rebates.
- Ensure your menu prices reflect changing costs of beer, wine and spirits.
- Check CRFA's website ([www.crfa.ca](http://www.crfa.ca)) for tools and information on the HST
- CRFA will be updating its website regularly as new information becomes available.

## ▶ TOP 5 REASONS TO JOIN GROUPEX

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## ▶ AND THE WINNERS ARE...

Last month at the BC Foodservice Expo and ApEx, CRFA honoured several exhibitors for outstanding booth presentation, staffing, design and originality.

### APEX WINNERS

#### TABLEWARE SOLUTIONS



Best Single Booth: CRFA's Chairman Gerard Curran (left), President Garth Whyte (second right) and Director Robert McKelvie (right) congratulate Bill Horosko of Tableware Solutions.

#### EAST COAST POS



Best 2 Booths: CRFA's Gerard Curran, Garth Whyte and Rober McKelvie with Steve Aucoin (second left), Marvin Hayes (centre left) and John Mackeen (centre right) from East Coast POS.

#### BIG ERIC'S



Best 3 and Over Booths: Tony Joy (second left) and Joe George (centre) of Big Eric's with CRFA's Garth Whyte, Gerard Curran and Robert McKelvie

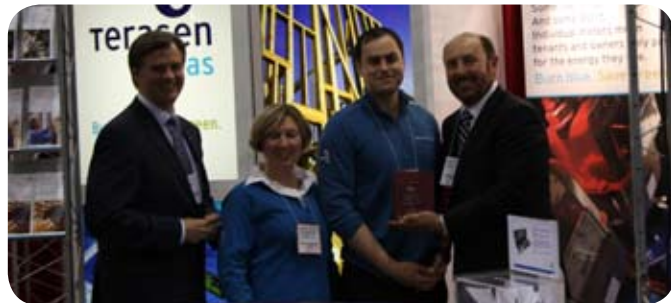
### BC FOODSERVICE EXPO WINNERS

#### TALIUS



Best Single Booth: Talius's Judith Costillo and Laud Vidal (centre) with CRFA President Garth Whyte (left) and Chairman Gerard Curran (right).

#### TERASEN



Best 2 - 4 Booths: Terasen's Beth Ringdahl and Ramsey Cook (centre) with CRFA's Garth Whyte and Gerard Curran.

#### RUSSELL FOOD EQUIPMENT



Best 5 and Over Booths: Russell Food Equipment Ltd.'s Patrick Portal (centre) with CRFA's Gerard Curran and Garth Whyte.

#### PONDEROSA MUSHROOMS



Winner of the Nat Bailey Award for Best in Show: Ponderosa Mushrooms's Joe Falvo (centre) with CRFA's Garth Whyte and Gerard Curran.

« TRADE SHOW WINNERS



## ▶ CATERER SAVES \$600 A YEAR WITH CRFA'S ESSO FUEL PROGRAM



CRFA's ESSO Fuel Program has offered significant fuel savings for Paul and Eva Janetta's Toronto-based catering business.

Over the last 14 years, the Janettas' Urban Fare Catering has grown to serve large corporate clients as well as smaller private affairs. The couple also runs a food shop that offers healthy prepared items and gifts popular with local residents.

### SAVING ON GAS

With four delivery trucks to serve their growing business, it was only natural for the Janettas to take advantage of CRFA's ESSO Fuel program that saves 2.9 cents on every litre of fuel. The couple saves approximately \$50 each month - or \$600 annually - on fuel purchases.

"These savings pay for our CRFA membership fee three times over," says Paul Janetta.

ESSO boasts the largest retail fuel network in Canada. By partnering with this giant, CRFA can offer members this discount on any fuel at all Esso retail locations across the country.

The discount appears on participants' monthly invoices. ESSO can also provide detailed and customized monthly invoicing for larger operations seeking to better manage their vehicle fuel expenses.

### OTHER PROGRAM BENEFITS

CRFA's ESSO Fuel Program also includes the following benefits:

- an Aeroplan Card Program (Air Canada flight points)
- over 600 ESSO car wash locations in Canada
- ESSO Speedpass for quicker payment
- ESSO E-Account Manager - online service
- ESSO Extra Card points program - collect and redeem for ESSO items or services
- ESSO station locator - [www.essostations.com](http://www.essostations.com)

### ENROLL TODAY

To enroll in this member-only program, contact CRFA at 1-800-387-5649.

## ▶ CRFA AT YOUR SERVICE

« AT YOUR SERVICE



CRFA offices are located across Canada to serve members. To help fight unfair government taxation and regulation, and to take advantage of our many member benefits, contact CRFA:

**By phone:** 1-800-387-5649

**By e-mail:** [info@crfa.ca](mailto:info@crfa.ca)

Participate today. Visit us online at [www.crfa.ca](http://www.crfa.ca) for the latest news, action campaigns, member specials and more.

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- Your 2010 *Foodservice Facts* magazine
- Your 2010 *Foodservice Pocket Factbook*

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## ▶ QUOTED: CRFA IN THE NEWS

### Minimum wage hike angers restaurants

"In this tough economy, the government realizes the need to control its own wage costs, but has no reservations about imposing a huge hike on Ontario restaurant payrolls," said Stephanie Jones of the Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association.

-- The Toronto Star, Apr. 1, 2010

### How to kill jobs; Ontario's mandatory minimum wage hike will force a struggling industry to cut hours and let go staff

When it comes to minimum wage, the Ontario government has firmly adopted a policy of "Do as I say, not as I do." Last week's provincial budget allows government to control its own payroll costs, while forcing restaurant owners to ingest an 8% increase in minimum wage -- moving it from \$9.50/hr to \$10.25/hr.

*Excerpt of opinion piece by CRFA's Stephanie Jones*

-- National Post, Apr. 1, 2010

### Eateries 'starving'; Wage bump could mean end of road

Forced to eat higher payroll costs, many Manitoba restaurants are at their breaking point between cuts in staff and services, dropping sales or shutting down altogether...

Courtney Hirota, vice-president of the association's Manitoba and Saskatchewan branch, estimates the province's coming wage hike will cost operators a total of about \$16 million. Raising menu prices is an option that leaves a bitter taste with businesses and their customers, she said.

-- The Winnipeg Sun, Apr. 15, 2010

### Tourism industry pans budget; Harmonized tax, no new marketing cited in criticism

Mark von Schellwitz, Western Canada vice-president of the Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association, said the budget is tantamount to the government turning its back on the restaurant industry in B.C.

"We're very disappointed. The industry gathered more than 200,000 signatures from staff, business owners and customers and they were ignored," he said. "This budget does nothing to protect the restaurant industry from the negative impact of the HST or to protect the thousands of jobs at stake in the industry."

-- Victoria Times Colonist, Mar. 3, 2010

### Business pans HST hike; Tax increase to negate incentives, say lobby groups

Luc Erjavec, vice-president in Atlantic Canada for the Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association, said concessions for small business included in this year's spending plan are eclipsed by the faulty logic behind the decision to increase the HST to 15 per cent - the highest rate in the country.

"This could have horrendous implications for the food and beverage industry and tourism," said Erjavec... "A two per cent increase in the HST takes [the] potential \$30 million of disposable income out of the hands of consumers and puts it into the pocket of government," he said.

-- The Halifax Chronicle Herald, Apr. 7, 2010

### Program benefits foreign workers

Without the TFW program, Alberta's labour shortage would have forced many restaurants to severely reduce hours or shut down altogether.

This would have resulted in staff/ management burn out, less customer service, and less economic growth, while robbing thousands of temporary foreign workers and their families the opportunity to improve their quality of life.

*Excerpt of letter to the editor from CRFA's Mark von Schellwitz*

-- Edmonton Journal, Mar. 23, 2010

### 10 foods for the future

The results of the survey were released at the annual CRFA Show that took place over the weekend in Toronto.

"It also reflects a multicultural environment," says Garth Whyte, president and CEO of CRFA. "There are more and more people from other countries and they're bringing ideas that become more and more mainstream."

Chefs, he says, lead trends in both food and drink. His association will now drill deeper into the trends and talk to chefs beyond the survey level.

"It's exciting. They show innovation in meeting customer needs."

-- The Vancouver Sun, Mar. 10, 2010

### Counting the cost of a big snack attack

Canada's restaurant industry has come under heavy criticism in recent years for not being transparent about its nutritional facts. In response, the Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association developed a program in which restaurants can voluntarily disclose nutritional information.

Ron Reaman, an association vice-president...says a large segment of the industry is trying to respond to consumer demand by providing nutritional information, and he worries that forcing them to single out calories could be misleading. For instance, he said, Diet Coke has fewer calories than milk, but it's not healthier.

-- The Globe and Mail, Apr. 1, 2010

## ► A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF CANADA'S SOARING LOONIE



**By Chris Elliott, CRFA Economist**

Along with hockey, one of Canada's favourite national pastimes is comparing itself to the United States. The Olympic gold medal hockey games were a perfect example of how national pride swells when we outperform our American counterparts. As Olympic fever abates, talk has turned to the economy where the soaring loonie is appreciating against the struggling U.S. greenback.

In early April, the Canadian dollar hit parity with the U.S. dollar for the first time since July 2008. The loonie is no featherweight on the global market either, outperforming several other major currencies including the British pound, the euro and the Japanese yen. Most analysts expect the strong Canadian dollar is here to stay. According to the latest forecast from RBC Economics, the Canadian dollar will hover near parity over the next two years.

Since April 2009, the loonie has jumped 24 per cent against the U.S. dollar due to rising oil prices and Canada's relatively strong economy compared to most other countries. According to a recent report by Organization for Economic Development and Co-operation (OECD), the Canadian economy is forecast to lead the G7 countries in the first half of 2010.

So what does this mean for Canadians and foodservice operators? A strong loonie carries a number of benefits, as well as a few challenges.

### 1. LOWER PRICES

The last time the loonie was at par, Canadians benefited from lower prices for imported fresh fruits and vegetables from the United States. It also forced retailers to reduce the price tags of items such as books, magazines and greeting cards to reflect the stronger dollar.

### 2. GROWING EXPORTS

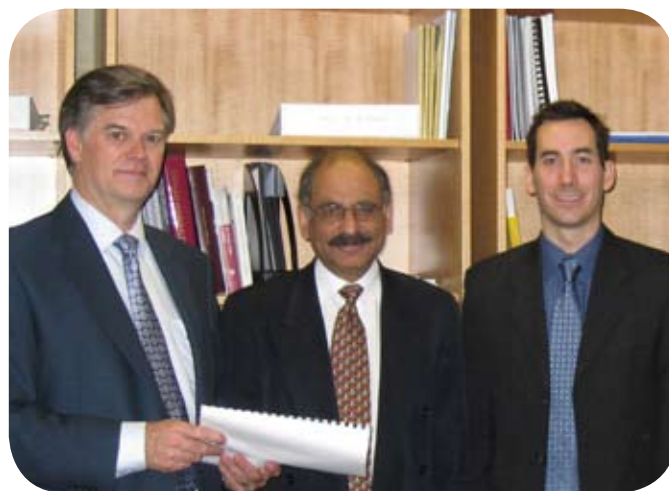
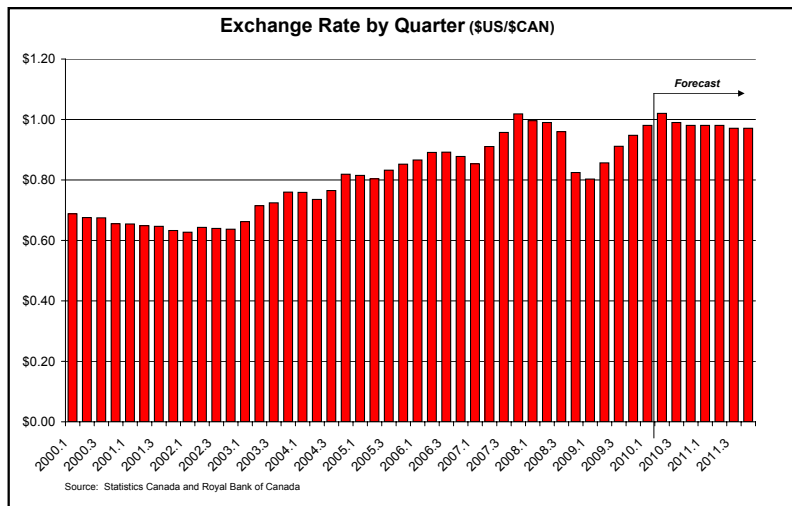
Although a strong Canadian dollar makes our exports less competitive in the global market, exporters have adopted efficient technologies and equipment to improve productivity. Consequently, they are better able to compete with a strong loonie. RBC Economics forecasts that exports from Canada will grow by a solid 8.0% in 2010 and a further 9.8% in 2011, following 2009's steep 14% decline. However, a continued appreciation in the Canadian dollar would be a drag on economic growth, causing consumers to cut back on discretionary spending.

### 3. INCREASED SPENDING IN THE UNITED STATES

When the Canadian dollar was at par between September 2007 and July 2008, same-day trips surged as bargain-hunters flocked to the U.S. Increased purchases south of the border will lower spending here at home, hurting our economy and foodservice sales.

### 4. LESS TRAVEL TO THE GREAT WHITE NORTH

Canada may drop down the list of vacation destinations, as the strong dollar makes it a more expensive place for foreign travellers. For example, the loonie was at par with the U.S. dollar in November 2007 when the number of same-day trips to Canada plummeted to their lowest level on record. Foodservice operators in border communities and tourist areas are hardest hit from a decline in American tourists.



CRFA President and CEO Garth Whyte (far left) and Economist Chris Elliott (right) met with Canada's Chief Statistician Munir Sheikh (centre) to review the quality of the monthly foodservice sales data produced by Statistics Canada. In the meeting, CRFA voiced concern that Statistics Canada's foodservice sales growth rates are overstated given the current economic climate, a view reinforced by many of our members. Sheikh promised to resolve this issue as quickly as possible, reaffirming a longstanding, positive and collaborative relationship between CRFA and Statistics Canada.

The Canadian economy is coming out strong from the recession, resulting in a robust Canadian dollar. Given the sharp decline in travel to Canada in the past nine years, it will only be a matter of time before we see how much this new reality affects the country's struggling tourism industry.



With close to 13,000 attendees and 1200 exhibitor booths, the 2010 CRFA show - held March 7-9 at Toronto's Direct Energy Centre - was a huge success. Here is a quick glance at some of the going-ons:



*Charismatic celebrity chef Lynn Crawford jokes with a standing room only crowd*



*Always a wealth of knowledge, Susur Lee explains his craft*



*The Thrifty Traveler, Kevin Brauch mixes up a one-of-a-kind concoction*

# 2010 CRFA Show at a Glance

*Tabasco serves up some heat with a batch of its secret mash*

*Tickets to the show were a hot commodity*

*Maximilian Riedel held a sold out wine tasting event*



*Some booths were smoking with excitement*

*CRFA and MediaEdge launch the inaugural issue of Canadian Restaurant & Foodservice News magazine*

*A panel of judges grade dishes in a cooking competition*

# Innovative Product Pavilion

One of the busiest sections of the 2010 CRFA tradeshow floor was the Sysco-sponsored Innovative Product Pavilion. In its foodservice show debut, the pavilion played host to 16 companies, each showcasing their latest and greatest products for the 4000 attendees that crowded the section over the three days. In all, more than 1200 ballots were submitted, and both winners and runners-up selected in three categories: Most Innovative Product, Product You Would Most Likely Buy Today and Best Overall Product. They were:



## Most Innovative Product

### Winner:

#### Sysco Bio-Based Products

The Sysco Earth Plus™ Bio-based products are truly innovative. The Sysco Earth Plus™ Bio-based black hinged lid container line is an all around solution for delivering quick service take-out meals or “to-go” containers in full service restaurants, designed to lock in heat and flavour while allowing contents to breathe.

Accompanying the containers are Sysco Earth Plus™ Bio-based Dinnerware and Cutlery, both lines unmatched in strength, durability and functionality, offering foodservice providers a guaranteed way to impress customers while handling all applications requiring heavy duty performance.



### Runner-Up:

#### Cascades Anti-Bacterial Tissue

This recent innovation by Cascades Tissue Group contributes to optimizing hand hygiene by combining effective drying with persistent antibacterial protection, compensating for people's imperfect hygienic habits without changing the way they do things. The intelligent™ antibacterial paper hand towel quickly reduces the amount of bacteria left on the hands after washing and provides antibacterial protection for 30 minutes afterward, unlike popular alcohol-based hand sanitizers and antibacterial soaps. It is odourless, non-irritating, non-allergenic, perfect for foodservice establishments and accepted by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. It is 100% recycled and is made of 80% post-consumer material. The paper is also green, to distinguish it from regular paper hand towels.



## Product Most Likely to Buy Today

### Winner:

#### McCain Red Skinned Potatoes

For a truly genuine plate appearance, McCain starts with specially selected red skin potatoes to ensure the finest red skin colour possible. Their choice red skin potatoes are then slow roasted and tumbled in a distinctive blend of rosemary and garlic seasonings which enhance their natural warm buttery potato flavour. With simple freezer to oven preparation, gourmet doesn't have to be complicated.



### Runner-Up:

#### Maple Leaf Thick Carved Roast Beef

Nothing says comfort food like roast beef. Whether served on bread as a sandwich, in a tortilla shell, or as the king of the plate in a staple meat and potatoes dish, Maple Leaf's Thick Carved Roast Beef not only gives customers a satisfying, high protein meal, but also foodservice operators a low labour, consistent menu option. Fully-cooked and fork tender, this product will have customers coming back for more.





# Innovative Product Pavilion

Sponsored by: Good things come from **Sysco**



## Best Overall Product

### Winner:

#### Saputo Rectangular Brie Alexis de Portneuf

Saputo's Rectangular Brie Alexis de Portneuf was a show stopper for a number of reasons, first and foremost being its extraordinary taste. This mild-flavoured soft cheese with hints of butter and mushroom boasts superb texture and consistency, and its rectangular shape makes it easy to slice, allowing for simple preparation and reduced waste. A versatile favourite when dining in or out, this cheese has infinite possibilities, making it the obvious choice for any foodservice operator looking to create a truly memorable dish.



### Runner-Up:

#### Toppits Atlantic Salmon Portions

In order to lock in the fresh flavor and taste, choice salmon is corralled live into the processing plant, resulting in a product that is fresh. These sushi-grade, prime centre cut portions are both chemical free and certified kosher, making them the perfect addition to any menu.



## 2010 Innovative Product Pavilion Participants

### Canada Bread / Olivieri

Cheese Topped Buns

### Maple Leaf Foods

Thick Carved Roast Beef

### Parmalat Foodservice

Raccoli Rope Cheese

### Sysco Fine Meats

Butcher's Block Beef

### Cascades Tissue

Antibacterial hand towel

### McCain Foods

Roasted Red Skin Potatoes

### Saputo

Rectangular Brie 1.5 kg

### Sysco Fresh Cut Produce

Soup and Salad Made Easy

### Ecolab

Apex™ Pot and Pan Soak

### Mother Parkers

Higgins & Burke Teas

### Sysco Earth Plus™

Environmentally friendly cups

### Tabasco®

Sweet & Spicy Sauce

### Kruger Products Limited

Electronic Roll Towel Dispenser

### Nestle Professional Vitality

Crane TT Nescafe Dispenser

### Sysco Earth Plus™

Biobased Products

### Toppits Portico

Atlantic Salmon Portions





# Correction

In an article entitled *In the Mood* in the March issue of *Canadian Restaurant & Foodservice News*, we incorrectly attributed the visuals to Empire Restaurant and Lounge. This was incorrect. We apologize for the mix up. See below for the corrections:



VERITAS RESTAURANT (Toronto, ON)  
 Owner: Brad Long  
 Designer: Glen Peloso, Principle of Glen Peloso Interiors  
 Photographer: Rick O'Brien Photography



EMPIRE RESTAURANT & LOUNGE (Toronto, ON)  
 Owner: Howard Laxton  
 Designer: Hirschberg Design Group (HDG)  
 Photographer: Joy von Tiedemann



## Customer PROFILES

It doesn't matter what you're selling. Be it food, equipment or a consulting service, the best products aren't sold...they're bought.

So who's buying your product or service? How did they hear about you? Why do they buy from you? And how can you reach more people like them?

A critical factor in discovering more about your customer is market segmentation or defining the who's who of your clientele.

Customer profiles can be broken down into the following areas:

**Geographics** Where are your customers coming from? It can be broken down by the city, province, country or even as targeted as a neighborhood or street.

**Demographics** How old are your customers? Are they male or female? What income bracket do they fall into? Are they married or single?

**Psychographics** What kind of behavioral patterns or lifestyle characteristics do they share? What are their beliefs, values and attitudes towards themselves and society?

**Geodemographics** Also known as cluster marketing, Geodemographics combines all the above. Its basic premise is that people who have similar backgrounds or live in the same area tend to have the same buying habits and patterns...."birds of a feather flock together."

*Patti Hone* is President of As You Like It Marketing & Communications Inc. She can be reached at [results@asyoulikeitmarketing.com](mailto:results@asyoulikeitmarketing.com).



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# Wisdom of THE AGES

With healthy living and food sensitivities top of mind, ancient grains are making a comeback

By Lisa Kopochinski





It is no surprise that the popularity of ancient grains has risen in recent years due to the increasing interest in living healthier lifestyles and a growing prevalence of food allergies.

Many mainstream establishments are now preparing dishes using quinoa, amaranth, kamut and spelt for a variety of reasons—flavour, health benefits, and a search for new adventures.

Andrea Carlson has been using ancient grains for about seven years. As executive chef for Bishops, a fine-dining restaurant in Vancouver, she says, “I use the grains because I like the flavour, textures and diversity. We love having a wide variety of vegetarian protein options available for guests.”

A fan of red quinoa, lentils, wheat and rye berries, Carlson says a renewed interest in ancient or heritage grains has

also generated interest in red fife wheat products, including berries.

“We do a lot of sautes with other vegetables,” she says. “We might use quinoa sauteed with shallots, diced roasted sunchoke and greens olives, which would act as a base for a protein along with an additional vegetable. And we recently featured wheatberry “risotto” using the wheatberries in substitute of rice to keep the dish locally food based.”

Across the country in Toronto, Donna Dooher, executive chef and proprietor at Mildred’s Temple Kitchen, says her establishment has gone through

several stages of grain use in the past 20 years.

“In the early nineties, when access to the grains was becoming more prevalent, there was a curiosity about them, but that quickly died down,” she says. “Now with a renewed interest in the health benefits of these grains, we have a much easier time serving them to our guests.”

**COSTS CAN VARY**

The cost of ancient grains can largely depend on your market. Carlson says they are not overly expensive in relation to other organic and local products.

Dooher agrees: “When you consider the cost of traditional proteins, such as beef and fish, these grains are

# A Guide to Ancient Grains

Navigating the sea of ancient grains can be confusing. If you are unsure which grains you might enjoy and their benefits, it’s best to do research on their history and uses. Here is an abbreviated guide to get you started.



**Amaranth**

A companion to quinoa, amaranth was once revered by the Aztec and has a history of use across many cultures. Recent research has indicated that this grain can lower blood pressure and high cholesterol.



**Kamut**

This ancient relative to wheat originated in Egypt. A great substitute for wheat, it has a sweet and buttery flavor and is often used in baked goods such as breads and cookies.



**Millet**

This small yellowish round grain, said to have originated in Ethiopia, looks like couscous and was widely consumed before rice and wheat became dominant grains. It is easy to cook and digest and can be used in a variety of recipes.



**Rice**

Thought to have originated in China at least 6,000 years ago, there are more than 1,000 different varieties of rice. Rice has been a staple for more than half the world’s population.



very good on the overall food cost of dishes.”

Levon Campbell, a vegan for the past decade and a chef at the Heartwood Bakery and Café in Halifax, does find the grains expensive and says he has seen a 50-percent increase in price in the last five years. “But we are not willing to compromise our values for the sake of a buck. Our eye strays from the bottom line to provide affordable, quality food in a low-to-medium income part of the country.”

#### SUPERIOR HEALTH BENEFITS

Research has shown that ancient grains often provide a richer source of nutrients such as protein, Vitamin B2, iron, phosphorus, copper, selenium, manganese, magnesium, calcium, zinc and many others.

They also help the environment. “Modern day farming techniques are taking a toll on our earth and producing these grains will bring some balance back to managing the land,” offers Dooher.

In addition to the health benefits, many people like the taste, which is often distinctive.

“Flavour is paramount for us,” says Dooher. “Currently we have a curried cauliflower dish with quinoa and goat yoghurt, which is very popular. We also do crepes using spelt flour instead of wheat.”

Campbell says the main reason Heartwood uses alternative grains is because they are more nutritious and less likely to have been modified.

“They are also less likely to be problematic for persons with food sensitivities,” he adds. “It’s gratifying to be able to make food and have people appreciate your ability to fuse flavour and texture.”

For instance, Campbell will prepare chili with quinoa and millet, and add kamut, spelt and rye to soups. “But special attention should be paid to which grains contain gluten, as gluten allergies seem to be increasingly prevalent,” he explains.

Adds Carlson, “A huge benefit of using the grains might be the nutritional value and you benefit from a good range of flavour and texture opportunities that you won’t find in other foods. But it also keeps the imaginations of cooks active!”



#### Barley

With its nutty flavour and chewy texture, barley is the oldest of grains and has been cultivated for approximately 10,000 years. It originated in the Middle East and North Africa and is often used in soups, stews, breads and cereals.



#### Buckwheat

Though not related to wheat, this fruit seed originated in Central Asia and is native to Northern Europe. An excellent alternative to rice or porridge, it is used in muffins, soups, stews and buckwheat pancakes.



#### Corn

A staple for more than 5,000 years, the different varieties are easily recognizable by their color. Corn is frequently used to make tortillas, cereal and polenta (a type of cornmeal).



#### Rye

Rye was first cultivated in Germany and is thought to have originated from a wild weed species that grew in wheat and barley fields. It can be a good choice for people with diabetes as it triggers a lesser insulin response compared to wheat bread.



#### Spelt

Spelt dates back to before even wheat. With its broader spectrum of nutrients, it can be a good alternative for some who cannot tolerate wheat. It has a pleasant, mild, nutty flavor and can be used like rolled oats in recipes.



#### Quinoa

This tiny grain, which can be red, orange, black, yellow or white is a complete source of protein. Pronounced keen-wa, it resembles couscous with its light and fluffy texture and is best as a side dish or in cold salads.

EQUIPMENT & TECHNOLOGY

KEEPING IT

Cool



By Lisa Kopochinski

## New trends in refrigerators, freezers and icemakers aim to help you reduce your carbon footprint

Energy efficiency and its cumulative impact on a restaurant's operation and bottom line continues to reign when it comes to new technology on the market in refrigerators, freezers and icemakers.

While energy efficiency isn't exactly new, what the foodservice industry is seeing this year and into 2011 are far more stringent Energy Star ratings being developed in an effort to further reduce energy consumption and the use of potential ozone-depleting chemicals.

"Customers are asking for equipment that is tougher, smarter, easier, more efficient, reliable and convenient to operate," says Larry Bishop, Traulsen product line manager with Hobart Equipment. "After all, food safety is the critical component when you talk to the customer."

John O'Hern, product development manager for Delfield, a division of Wisconsin-based Manitowoc Foodservice agrees and says the technology being focused on in the refrigeration market is anything that will provide enhanced energy efficiency.

"A major contributor to the performance and energy consumption of a unit is the control it uses," he explains. "It can enhance the pull-down times of the refrigeration system, reduce the compressor cycling and provide adaptive defrost capabilities."

For even lower energy consumption, higher efficiency component parts such as fan motors are being examined for use in the refrigeration segment. Also important is sizing the refrigeration system to the appropriate cabinet and application, which will enhance both energy consumption and life expectancy of the component parts.

Over the past two years, O'Hern says the biggest trend is the variety of product available to every consumer. "When the customer is able to get exactly the variation of product they ask for, it allows them to operate their kitchen more efficiently and lower their operational costs."

In addition to improved technology and higher quality equipment is a move to longer-life products. A number of manufacturers have been proactive in these areas, but a differentiation between the tangible benefits of respected manufacturers and those that take a run at the lower-end price point segment will become more self-evident in the coming years, reports Scott Brown, vice president, sales, marketing and support services for HABCO Beverage Systems Inc.

"Professional end users will drive this cause with self-education and understanding that focusing limited time on core business is more cost-effective than researching and replacing low-cost commercial appliances on a regular basis," says Brown.

### REDUCING YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT

With ever-increasing energy costs and more tightly controlled power usages being mandated by federal programs, refrigerators and freezers are being designed to increase capacity within the same or smaller footprints.

"There have been many successes with earth-friendlier refrigerants and insulation, reduced VOC paints and inks, better insulated glass, low-bulk packaging, and assorted other design, manufacturing and business processes," says Brown.

For instance, HABCO's Cassette refrigeration is green by design. Introduced in 1995, it provides the ability to upgrade to new technology as it develops, without disposal of a full reach-in cabinet.

"The carbon footprint is much less to transport an upgraded Cassette than a new refrigerator," explains Brown. "The refrigerant can be safely reclaimed in a controlled



“Customers are asking for equipment that is tougher, smarter, easier, more efficient, reliable and convenient to operate.”

Larry Bishop

**THE FUTURE**

As for what the near future holds, consumers will continue to see refrigeration equipment become even more energy efficient and environmentally friendly.

One example of this is Manitowoc's green foaming process where the walls of ice storage bins are injected with foam, which serves as insulation against warmer ambient temperatures.

“For years companies would inject certain types of foam and insulation using refrigerant as a propellant, which is a harmful pollutant,” explains Sara. “We have greatly improved this process and switched to a water-based propellant, completely eliminating the release of refrigerant as a bi-product of the foaming operation.”

HABCO's Brown says energy-efficient technology has seen the greatest improvement since 2000, with better quality and lower life-cost as added benefits. The mechanics of freezers have improved with digital thermostats, which offer more precise temperatures, precision defrost, trouble alarms and diagnostic codes. However, a good portion of the industry still utilizes electro-mechanical timers and thermostats.

“Over the past ten years, average kilowatt-hour usage of reach-in refrigerators has decreased over 50 per cent. The decrease has been realized for the most part, through use of lower energy versions of the same components.”

As for its part in the market, HABCO will continue to develop its Cassette technology with new advancements in components, design and process.

“Reach-ins featuring Cassette will become more widely prominent with chain businesses as the benefits of standardizing on this design grows in the marketplace,” says Brown. “Namely, completely front breathing units eliminate air-flow restriction and require less depth. There is minimal impact on location traffic during maintenance and service, improved access for cleaning and sanitation and the ability to simply upgrade the refrigeration system without moving the cabinet.”

environment. Our old Cassette can be virtually stripped for spare parts in less than one half-hour and platform recycled. And, the cost to do all this is more sustainable for the owner because upgrade costs are lower and there is reciprocal payback from the new technology.”

Reducing energy consumption is not only important for refrigerators and freezers, but extends to icemakers as well.

Manitowoc senior product manager, John Sara says that over the last year, more customers and consultants are requesting Energy Star qualified ice machines, especially given current economic conditions.

“These machines are typically 10 to 15 per cent more efficient than standard machines,” he explains. “The difference between a new high efficiency machine and an older ice machine could mean up to \$100 in utility savings annually. And besides energy, cleaning cost is another important factor. Upfront cost savings in the price of the machine might be only a fraction of what can truly be saved in the long run by purchasing an ice machine that's more efficient and easier to clean.”

**BIG CHANGES OVER PAST DECADE**

The industry has seen big changes over the past five to 10 years as significant improvements have been made to reduce energy and water consumption. Many of these efficiencies have been realized through improved system design and synergies with suppliers who offer more efficient components, such as compressors.

“For Manitowoc, one example of an advanced design can be found in the ice-harvest method, including the use of our patented air-assist technology, which speeds up the ice-making cycle and reduces the energy required,” says Sara.

With refrigerators and freezers, Delfield's O'Hern says the use of cap tubes in all pieces of refrigeration as a mean of regulating the refrigerant flow was the norm just 10 years ago.

“It has since changed to using an expansion valve, which enhances the precision, allowing for a more consistent temperature in the cabinet, reduced energy consumption and quicker reaction times to changes in ambient temperature.”

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# Embracing the VIRTUAL CLASSROOM



*"I don't have the time to spend a whole day (or more) taking a food safety class."*

*"Our people have already taken food safety training. Can't they do something different to refresh their knowledge?"*

*"We can't get our people all together for a class. Who is going to run the business?"*

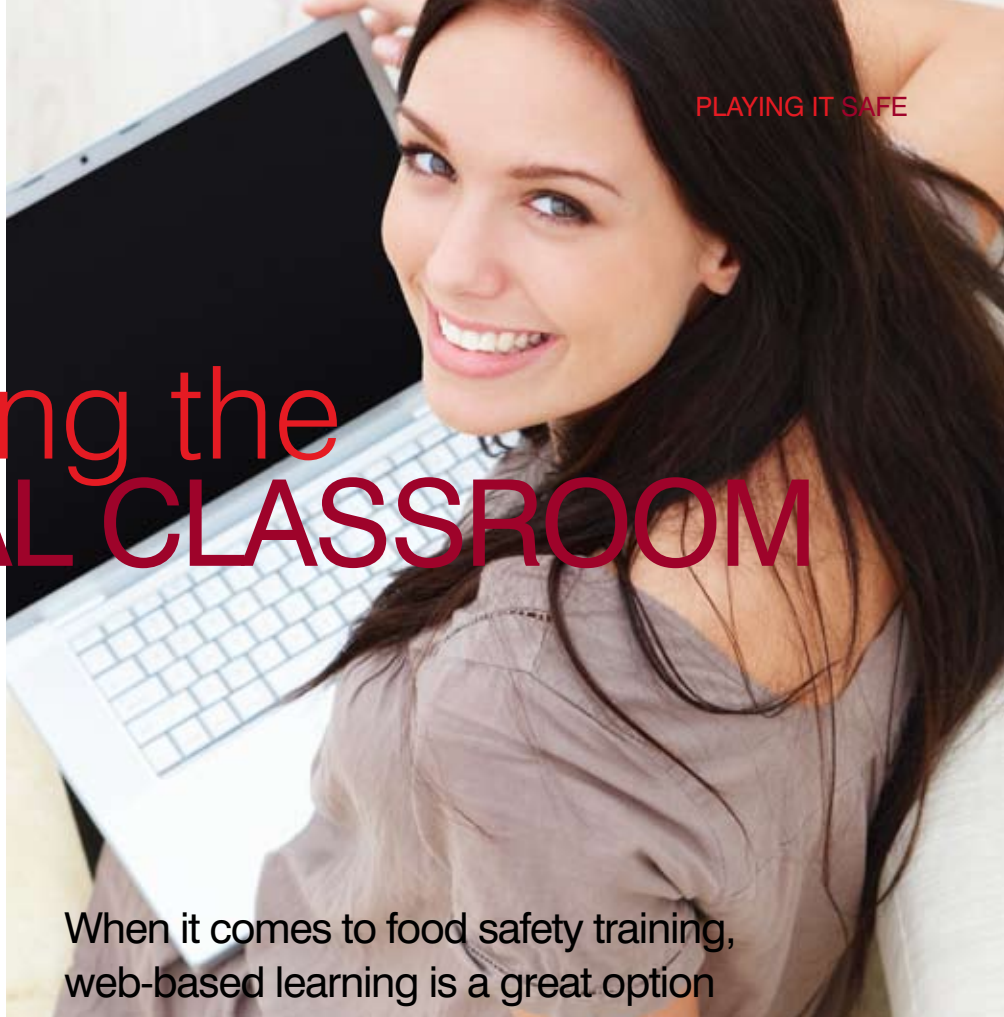
*"Our food handlers are in remote locations. It is too expensive to send a trainer for one or two people."*

For the past couple of decades, I have listened to people who are faced with challenges that make traditional classroom-based food safety training difficult – if not impossible. Time, distance and expense are all real considerations for the provision of food safety training. Fortunately, technology provides a vehicle for minimizing some of these obstacles.

There are some clear benefits to online training:

- It eliminates the barrier of distance. Anyone with a computer and access to the Internet can participate no matter where they are. We just had a student complete their training on a ship at sea!
- The time required to complete the learning can be spread over several short periods. This makes online learning as flexible as the learner's schedule requires.
- Web-based learning is quite affordable, and reducing the cost of food safety training making it more accessible for those with limited budgets.

A couple years ago, I did research for a Master's degree paper on web-based learning to explore its implications for food safety education. My research revealed that there were some common misconceptions about decreased discussion and lack of



When it comes to food safety training, web-based learning is a great option

interaction. The truth, however, was that online courses level the playing field, permitting everyone to post comments without any one person taking over a discussion (as can happen in the classroom). Plus, new technology opened the door to interactive quizzes and games, offering students not only a more pleasurable experience, but also a chance to increase information retention. Today, this is nothing new, and many students prefer learning via web-based classes.

Online learning is not a panacea for food safety education. There are food handlers of an earlier generation that may not be comfortable with the technology and some activities can only be facilitated in a traditional classroom. However, web based learning offers many features that make it an attractive option for food handler training.

- Multi-media appeals to different senses.
- Images help reinforce central messages.
- Narration enables learners to listen as well as read the content.
- Discussion forums provide opportunities for interaction between

learners and facilitators.

- Frequent quizzes help evaluate learner knowledge and retention every step of the way.
- Feedback from quizzes is immediate, helping the learner identify their strengths and weaknesses.
- Learners can see their grades as they progress.
- Certificates of achievement can be triggered based on criteria such as course completion and passing grade.
- Student surveys contribute to the ongoing improvement of the web based experience.

The initial reaction to the online food safety training program (<http://learn.nfstp.ca>) has been very encouraging.

It is important to distinguish between web-based training and food handler certification. Certification still requires food handlers to write an exam that is invigilated by an approved proctor. Nonetheless I am hoping this new initiative will eliminate some of the excuses for putting off food safety education.

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*Kevin Freeborn is an award-winning consultant, author and speaker with 30 years' foodservice experience. Founder of Freeborn & Associates, a management consulting firm that helps companies achieve their goals, he has been retained by leading North American organizations to develop food safety programs and training. For more information, call 1.888.829.3177.*



# Going GREEN

## Figure on boosting your menu with local and sustainable flavours



When the results were announced, those of us working the 'green' side of the street were all smiles.

Of the top ten Canadian menu trends for 2010, compiled by the first-ever CRFA 2010 *Canadian Chef Survey*, the top five are: locally sourced food, sustainability, organic produce, artisanal cheeses and simplicity/back-to-basics. And, in a rare occurrence, these choices mirror those topping the list in a similar survey conducted south of the border by the National Restaurant Association (NRA).

Not surprisingly, though, these results are also in sync with those from front-of-house. Consumer surveys, particularly among younger demographics, indicate that many more people are making dietary choices tied to two factors: healthier eating and sustainability. A recent Ipsos poll shows that, though their expectations were mitigated by the economic downturn, more than half of

Canadian consumers will again be considering a retailer's 'green actions' when making their spending choices.

From either perspective, and beyond their positive nature, these trends present both tremendous challenges and opportunities for all stakeholders in the foodservice industry.

An ad hoc survey conducted by the Green Table Network in 2008 indicated that even in BC, a bastion of local food activism, the local/regional content on restaurant menus averaged approximately 10 per cent, with organic and sustainable content down at only one per cent. No doubt there have been significant gains in some sectors, but overall there's a 'long row to hoe' to put more locally sourced and sustainable products in walk-ins and on 'fresh sheets' across the industry.

It boils down to one formula: our capacity for change will determine the



change in capacity. Right now, at a fundamental level, demand for local, sustainable and organic easily outstrips available supply. Addressing that reality on a macro level requires a Top 10 list of complex initiatives, including a core shift in agricultural export policies and incentives; a review of marketing boards and supply management policies; decentralization of food processing and distribution facilities; and many more daunting and multi-lateral tasks.

However, there are lots of smaller, and somewhat easier, steps being taken by those trend-setting chefs and their industry partners in every channel. Many multi-unit operators in Canada are collaborating with their national broad line distributors to stimulate more sustainable production and add more local/regional content on regular order sheets. More and more independents are turning to specialty foodservice suppliers and local food hubs, such as Biovia Organic Link in Vancouver or the Kitchener, Ont.-based 100 Mile Market, to provide a wide variety and reliable supply of farm-direct or co-operative-supported local and sustainable products. And for many chefs, like their customers, raising their awareness of products, both regional and seasonal, is the delicious by-product of regular trips to the local farmers' market or fishermen's wharf.

Though there is certainly a growing niche market for 100-mile menus and other long-on-local concepts, given the supply challenges and related cost premiums the future of sustainable-source products is best served when the majority of operators 'pick their spots' to go green. Even the most avid locavores don't expect, or even want, to satisfy their appetite and commitment in a single meal, so a simple, tasty step or two in the right direction will still be rewarded.

An easy place to start is with a single switch to a fish or seafood product certified by made-in-Canada programs, such as the Vancouver Aquarium's Ocean Wise program and the SeaChoice program, or to a featured protein or produce item certified as local and

sustainable by Toronto-based Local Food Plus. Other sweet spots might include a local organic honey or seasonal berries from a popular local grower, served fresh or turned into a house-made compote for all-season use. And, of course, if every CRFA member were to decide to 'start small' in these ways, the effects wouldn't be small at all.

However, combinations of actions and trends can offer the biggest opportunity for change. For example, at Vancouver's Refuel Restaurant, Chef Robert Belcham was unaware that a mainstay of his menu combines three of the top five trends for 2010 with number seven on the list, free-range pork. Every week, he and his kitchen crew get back-to-basics in butchering two whole free-range, heritage breed pigs from Sloping Hills Farm near Qualicum Beach on Vancouver Island.

"Just some of the benefits of this whole animal butchery include a better product, a variety of menu options, support for the local economy and preserving skills and knowledge that every cook should have," says Belcham.

At \$7.70/kg (from trotter to snout) versus \$17/kg for tenderloin from conventional sources, Belcham notes that, after awhile, the economics favour his hands-on, local approach."

It's a lot of pork coming in the door every week, and we had our challenges in getting the cuts right, running a cryovac machine, making proper charcuterie and bacon...even dealing with changes due to the animals' seasonal diet," he says, "but it's really worth it to get to know your food this well."

Belcham adds that he's never going back to 'commodity pork,' and his regular customers likely wouldn't let him.

"Sometimes it tastes 100 times better, sometimes it's easily 1,000 times better," he says. "Our customers do appreciate it, and they're demanding more local, sustainable meats and products everywhere they eat."

In the end, when going greener in foodservice, it really does all add up.

*André LaRivière is executive director of the Green Table Network, a Vancouver-based organization helping operators, suppliers and diners across Canada put "sustainability on the menu." Find more information at [www.greentable.net](http://www.greentable.net).*

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# Understanding THE REAL MSG

## Put the Pinch on Salt



Something a little serendipitous happened recently while dining out with my family at a Chinese restaurant in Toronto. After the waiter took our order, he asked if we preferred “no MSG” with our meals.

As the daughter of a Chinese chef, I have been enjoying my dad’s authentic cuisine – without any added MSG – all my life. And as a dietitian, my job is to encourage Canadians to be proactive and choose healthier options when they eat out. So, putting two and two together, you can probably guess that I answered the waiter’s question with a resounding, “Yes please!”

The problem though isn’t MSG per se. The problem is sodium. MSG is just one of the many ingredients that are a source of sodium in our food supply.

The latest figures from Statistics Canada show that all of us are eating far too much sodium. On average, Canadians eat almost 3100 mg of sodium a day, which is about one-third more than the recommended maximum. Men, it seems, are far worse than women, ingesting approximately 4100 mg of sodium daily, and that’s NOT including what they add during cooking or eating. What’s more troubling is that 75 per cent of our

Nutrition Facts	
Valeur nutritive	
Per 1 Cup (250mL) / pour 1 tasse (250 mL)	
Amount	% Daily Value
Teneur	% valeur quotidienne
Calories / Calories	80
<b>Fat/Lipides</b> 0 g	<b>0 %</b>
Saturated / saturés 0 g	0 %
+ Trans / trans 0 g	
<b>Cholesterol / Cholestérol</b> 0 mg	<b>0 %</b>
<b>Sodium / Sodium</b> 10 mg	<b>0 %</b>
<b>Potassium / Potassium</b> 250 mg	<b>7 %</b>
<b>Carbohydrates / Glucides</b> 19 g	<b>6 %</b>
Fibre / Fibres less than 1g	3 %
Sugars / Sucres 16 g	
<b>Protein / Protéines</b> less than 1g	
Vitamin A / Vitamine A	0 %
Vitamin C / Vitamine C	100 %
Calcium / Calcium	0 %
Iron / Fer	2 %

preschoolers, and a shocking 93 per cent of kids aged four to eight are also overdosing on sodium.

There is a clear link between sodium consumption and hypertension. A landmark Canadian study found that reducing our salt intake could eliminate hypertension in one million Canadians and save \$430 million a year in health care costs relating to the disease. A couple of years ago, I interviewed Dr. Norm Campbell, Chair of the Canadian Hypertension Education Program, President of Blood Pressure Canada, and one of the study’s authors. His words still ring clearly in my head. He said: “Even if blood pressure is normal at the age of 55, 90 per cent of people will develop high blood pressure later in life.”

It is this type of awareness and education that we need. With World Hypertension Day upon us, consumers will no doubt be seeing, reading and

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hearing more about what they can to prevent and treat hypertension.

But the prevention of hypertension is impossible without the support of the food industry. A national Working Group on Dietary Reduction of Sodium has been charged with the mandate of developing and implementing a strategy for reducing dietary sodium intake among Canadians. Members of the group include stakeholders from food manufacturing and industry groups, as well as health agencies, academia, consumer advocacy groups and government. Their final strategy report with recommendations is due out next month.

As a long time nutrition consultant to the food industry, I know it's going to take some time to reformulate products and 'retrain' consumers' taste buds. I do, however, like what I'm seeing thus far.

Kudos to Campbell Company of Canada, who in 2007, received Blood

“ The problem though isn't MSG per se. The problem is sodium. ”

Pressure Canada's Certificate of Excellence in recognition of its leadership in producing and promoting lower sodium soup choices. Thumbs up to the Heart and Stroke Foundation for lowering the sodium criteria in their Health Check program for restaurant and foodservice meals. And three cheers

for the Chinese waiter who himself took the initiative to offer me a sodium-conscious meal. It was absolutely delicious.

[Editor's note: CRFA represents the foodservice industry on the Working Group on Dietary Reduction of Sodium mentioned above. See page 43.

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## ADVERTISING INDEX

Alberta Foodservice Expo.....	35	Maple Leaf Foodservice.....	38
As You Like It Marketing .....	56	<a href="http://www.mapleleaf.com">www.mapleleaf.com</a>	
<a href="http://www.asyoulikeitmarketing.com">www.asyoulikeitmarketing.com</a>		Nestle Professional.....	9
Bank of Canada .....	34	<a href="http://www.nestleprofessional.com">www.nestleprofessional.com</a>	
<a href="http://www.bankofcanada.ca/en/banknotes">www.bankofcanada.ca/en/banknotes</a>		Parmalat Canada .....	6
Cardinal Meats.....	19	<a href="http://www.parmalat-foodservice.ca">www.parmalat-foodservice.ca</a>	
<a href="http://www.cardinalmeats.com">www.cardinalmeats.com</a>		Rational Canada.....	21
Carmi Flavors.....	65	<a href="http://www.rational-canada.com">www.rational-canada.com</a>	
<a href="http://www.carmiflavors.com">www.carmiflavors.com</a>		Heinz Canada (Renée's Gourmet).....	IBC
Cintas Corporation .....	27	<a href="http://www.reneesfs.com">www.reneesfs.com</a>	
<a href="http://www.cintas.ca">www.cintas.ca</a>		<a href="http://www.foodservice.heinz.ca">www.foodservice.heinz.ca</a>	
Freeborn & Associates.....	34	Saputo Dairy Products Canada G.P.....	OBC
<a href="http://www.nfstp.ca">www.nfstp.ca</a>		<a href="http://www.saputo.com">www.saputo.com</a>	
HABCO® Beverage Systems Inc. ....	62	Sysco Canada.....	17
<a href="http://www.habcotech.com">www.habcotech.com</a>		<a href="http://www.sysco.ca">www.sysco.ca</a>	
Heinz Canada.....	4	Tabasco Foodservice .....	IFC
<a href="http://www.foodservice.heinz.ca">www.foodservice.heinz.ca</a>		<a href="http://www.tabascofoodservice.com">www.tabascofoodservice.com</a>	
Kendale Products - Broaster .....	65	TD Merchant Services.....	23
<a href="http://www.broaster.com">www.broaster.com</a>		<a href="http://www.tdmerchantservices.com/restaurant">www.tdmerchantservices.com/restaurant</a>	
Lassonde.....	15, 25	Thermor Measurement Specialist.....	66
<a href="http://www.lassonde.com">www.lassonde.com</a>		<a href="http://www.biosexactly.com">www.biosexactly.com</a>	
		Visa.....	3





# It's Lynn TIME

## Embarking on her greatest adventure yet, Chef Lynn Crawford is having the time of her life

While she may not leap small buildings in a single bound, Lynn Crawford has quickly become a culinary superhero, her hit Food Network show *Pitchin' In* sending her out to capture the best, freshest ingredients in the world, an experience she refers to simply as “magic.”

Today, however, Chef Lynn isn't chasing sows on a prairie farm, hunting down mushrooms in Oregon or fishing lobster in the Bay of Fundy. Instead, she, along with Chef Lora Kirk, are embarking on another adventure: putting the finishing touches on the daily menu for her recently opened funky east Toronto restaurant, Ruby Watchco.

“I always knew that one day I would open up my own restaurant,” she says adjusting the sunglasses holding back her hair, “it's always been a dream of mine. And it's amazing. I get to express myself every day with the creation of a new menu that showcases the farmers and growers, who are the real stars, not Lynn Crawford.”

It was during her time with the Four Seasons - 24 years to be exact - that Crawford too became a star. There she climbed the ladder, working seven postings at five properties and eventually attaining the position of executive chef in Toronto,

and then, in her last role with the company, in New York.

“I'm so lucky to have had that opportunity,” she explains. “I loved my job, but it just wasn't enough. I needed something different, something new. As an executive chef, you're often further removed from the stoves than you'd like, and I felt that I wanted to be more in tune with the food. It wasn't that I had lost my passion. I just needed to fuel it again. In a selfish way it was Lynn time again.”

With so much of her formative years in the luxury hotel environment, Crawford readily admits that there is much she brings from that experience to her new venture. “My standards are very, very high,” she offers. “And the guest experience is so important to me. From the moment they first walk through the door to when they leave. I really genuinely care about what people think. I want them to leave the restaurant with lasting memories.”

What then, as a new restaurateur, does she feel is the recipe for success? “I think you have to have a lot of heart, soul and passion,” she says. “But you also need clarity, commitment and dedication, always pressing forward towards your vision, your mission, the message you're trying to communicate. If that gets diluted in any way, then I think things become unstable.”

Thus far, Ruby Watchco's reviews have been phenomenal, which makes sense, because Crawford's passion is palpable, her love of food evident in the way she flips through the first two months' worth of menus, gushing over each of the dishes and the way she talks about both her staff and the restaurant's co-owners Cherie Stinson and Joey Skeir.

According to Crawford, no matter how you look at it, she's been blessed. Whether she's being pelted by olives in California or saying goodnight to her guests after a busy Saturday evening, Chef Lynn has her groove back.

“I'll be honest,” she says with a smile. “There's not a moment of the day that I don't think to myself ‘wow, I'm very lucky.’”



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